

Banksia Bytes

Native Plants Sunshine Coast

www.npqsuncoast.org



Native Plants Queensland



Newsletter

May 2022 Number 28

OFFICE BEARERS

Spencer Shaw	President	spencer.shaw@brushturkey.com.au
.....	Hon Secretary	npscsec@gmail.com
Joan Abercrombie	Hon Treasurer	joan.abercrombie@skymesh.com.au
Wendy Johnston	Banksia Bytes Editor	news.npq.suncoast@bigpond.com
.....	Excursions Coordinator	
Maria Rosenfelder	Webmaster	npqsuncoast.web@gmail.com

URGENT - NPSC secretary and excursions officer positions to fill - Can you help?



These two positions are needing to be filled as the current Secretary and Excursions Officer are unable to continue. Could be realistically done by the same person. Please contact npscsec@gmail.com for more information on how you could step into these rewarding volunteer roles.

I hope you are all safe and well after all this relentless rain. Maybe you have taken the opportunity to plan your next garden bed and are ready to plant up with lovely natives, or a trip to see more of our Australian flora and fauna in places where water doesn't often run. Or maybe, like me, you have been contemplating where the birds hide and what they do when the weather makes foraging difficult.

Enjoy your moments in the garden, Wendy

Excursions

Sunday, 12th June - 9.00a.m. start. Excursion to a private property in the Bellthorpe area. Byo morning tea and seating. Please do not come if feeling unwell.

For rsvp and directions contact Pam: lpw3@bigpond.com or 5429 6845

Due to the lack of an excursions officer, we have no program. However, if you have an idea for an excursion, please contact one of the office bearers so that we can discuss and advertise a suitable time and place.



Vale Ian Inglis

It is with sadness I report that Ian Inglis passed away peacefully in Nambour on 19th April. Ian was a long-term and very regular member of NPQ since his relocating to Queensland from Victoria more than 30 years ago. On moving to Nambour in the early 2000s, he was instrumental in encouraging the formation of our Sunshine Coast Branch of the society. His cheerful persona was to be seen at all NPQ events until poor health reduced his ability to participate. Even then, he persevered with his walker on excursions with amazing persistence. I particularly remember him pushing his walker across the rocky unfriendly track at Bobby Sattler Reserve.

Ian's cheerful smile will be missed.

The Battle of the Bees

By Greg Miller

The native stingless bee was there first and claimed ownership. But the blue banded bee was not to be deterred.



Battle of the Bees!
Blue Banded Bee (top right) with Native Stingless Bee (bottom right)
visiting a white melastoma flower.
Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Gardens, Tanawha. 08/03/2022

Eucalyptus latisinensis (Broad-leaved White Mahogany)

By Robert Price

In early November Linda and I spent two nights in Urangan. I'd been told of an interesting patch of littoral vine forest at River Heads so, while L. op shopped in Hervey Bay, I drove the 17 km. south to the Fraser Island ferry terminal. Along the way I noticed a large Eucalypt in flower amongst some remnant bush on the side of the road. I didn't recognise it so thought I'd stop on the way back for a closer look.



The terminal and boat ramp are situated on the north head of a magnificent estuary where the mouths of the Susan and Mary Rivers join to empty into Great Sandy Strait. Beginning at the rear of the car park is a 900 m. walking track through the forest above the water line. In the understorey are plant species familiar to most Botany Group members such as *Xanthorrhoea macronema*, *Carissa ovata*, *Exocarpos latifolius* and *Elaeocarpus obovatus*.



The views over mangroves to the Susan River and Kangaroo Island are superb.



Spotting some Eucalyptus flowers on the forest floor, however, prompted me to look up to the canopy: Kauri Pine and a Eucalypt with rough, deeply furrowed bark somewhat reminiscent of an ironbark, possibly the one I'd seen earlier.



From descriptions, including in *Forest Trees of Australia*, I believe it is *Eucalyptus latisinensis* or Broad-leaved White Mahogany. An alternative common name, Shade Mahogany, is derived from its former botanical name, *Eucalyptus umbra*, and possibly a reference to the tree's dense canopy. The appearance and qualities of the timber give it the mahogany moniker. Distribution is from Sydney to Cooktown, generally close to the sea on infertile, poorly drained soils. On the Sunshine coast it only occurs in a small area north of Tewantin and, along with other more common White Mahogonies *E. carnea* and *E. acmenoides*, is a member of the subgenus *Monocalyptus*. Flowering is from spring to early summer.

Where the track ends, it is possible to follow the cleared edge of the forest up a steep slope to meet the road at the top of the hill. Walking back down the road to the car park, you are on the edge of dry rainforest where you'll find more unusual species.

Some to note are:

1. *Samadera bidwillii* (Quassia), a shrub in family Simaroubaceae, not seen on the Sunshine Coast as it occurs from Gympie north. The flowers are small and insignificant but the plant's attractive, bushy habit would look good in a garden. I've not seen it in cultivation.



2. *Capparis sarmentosa*, a climbing member of the Caper family with fragrant flowers followed by red fruit.



3. *Aglaia brownii*, a small tree in family Meliaceae, also not occurring south of Gympie.



4. *Acacia bakeri* (Marblewood), an uncommon rainforest wattle.



Stopping on the return trip to Hervey Bay at the tree I'd seen earlier allowed me a better look at the canopy to photograph the flowers and decide it was the same Eucalypt, *E. latisinensis*.



Residents honoured for milestone dedication to conservation

From Bush Hands

The Dillons (pictured), along with 90 other Sunshine Coast Land for Wildlife members, were recognised for their long-term dedication to conserving and preserving our environment at a ceremony today (9 March).

Twenty years ago, the Dillons moved to their property at Hunchy, and were faced with 4.4 hectares of degraded environment.

Fast forward two decades, and their property is greatly improved and thriving thanks to their hard work and the advice and support from the Sunshine Coast Land for Wildlife program.

Today (March 9) the Dillons, along with 90 other Sunshine Coast Land for Wildlife members, were recognised for their long-term dedication to conserving and preserving our environment at a ceremony at Venue 114*, Bokarina.



Here is Joan and John's inspiring story.

Land for Wildlife 20 years

We know nothing of the First Nations history of our area, but it was probably traversed by coastal people on their way to the Bunya festivals in the valley that is now Lake Baroon. Our forests cannot be returned to what they were in the past as there have been many changes over the years. However, thanks to Land for Wildlife and other programs, we are all creating and enhancing important habitats for their wildlife.

Hunchy was settled by Europeans in the late 1800's and even in that era, lantana was noted! There were also patches of open grassland and the tree cover was described as 'dry vine forest', which it undoubtedly is. I'm told the area in general was logged for Red Cedar and White Beech but was described by loggers as the 'bastard scrub'. We quickly learned why; getting down some of our slopes can be decidedly difficult and the idea of hauling logs out boggles the mind.

Dairying, beans, other crops for sale and barter, and lastly casual beef cattle grazing followed because the property wasn't fenced. Cattle do know a thing or two about slopes and we followed a cattle track through the lantana to get to where we finally built our house.

A misguided agricultural scientist introduced glycine as a pasture legume, and not just in Hunchy. It of course enjoyed the soil and climate along with most other weeds known to SEQ.

Enter the Dillons who like many others had lived interstate. We had previously been involved in environmental matters, joined Barung Landcare prior to our arrival and had met our adjacent neighbours. This was a really good move as many of our neighbours were members of the same family whose forbears had settled in Hunchy. They made a practice of retaining pockets of native forest to hold the slip prone soil and these are being added to today. How fortunate we were!

There were challenges. Weeds of course and very steep country dissected by one small creek and several deep gullies. Wandering cattle had caused some erosion of the steep and mobile dark basalt soil. It is slip country. A 4WD tractor and a brushcutter each were essential tools. There were a few remnant trees deep in the gullies but otherwise weed species dominated.

Ignoring the weeds while building a house and otherwise “living”, in inverted commas, was also a challenge. The issue of whether to use herbicide and if so, how to use it; not a preference anyway but sometimes unavoidable.

An unexpected and more recent challenge has been the invasiveness of certain local species, generally spread by birds. On other soil types they can actually be difficult to grow. Soils in this area do vary a lot depending on the underlying basalt, sandstone or coastal sands. It's been essential to experiment and at times delete some otherwise desirable species from the plant list. Attempting to establish an area of native grasses in competition with introduced pasture species proved to be almost impossible, although dense barbed wire grass as a monoculture, not what I actually wanted, was relatively successful. It didn't last. Every conceivable grass suppressing underlay was tried!

About 10 years later the area is now the 'shrub and grass field' a mixture of low shrubs, small but spreading native grasses and other ground cover. Dense low shrubs such as *Austromyrtus dulcis* have taken over the job of grass suppression.

Successes are a great incentive. Working with the neighbours on our eastern boundary has created a 50m wide forested zone as a corridor for our joint wildlife. The actual boundary crosses a slip zone so is ignored. We work above it, our neighbour below it.

Who has read the hilarious book, 'Lantana Lane' by Eleanor Dark? There's history of ignoring surveyed boundaries on this type of country.

We successfully created habitat for a wide range of small birds. That is so important. Neighbours sometimes say, '*I haven't seen certain small honeyeaters for a long time*' and I can respond "*they're at my place*". Habitat is the key.

We learned from our neighbours. We don't all do things the same way or have the same objectives but adapt to our circumstances and our own knowledge.

We all get along just fine.

We had species advice from Barung. Our LfW officers from Council provided invaluable advice including "not biting off more than you can chew"! It is so easy to want to do everything at once. Don't even think about it!

So, we started at the front gate and built our revegetation program out from there, taking advantage of an established edge. We planted up from the creek and gullies on both sides, taking advantage of any shade provided by remnant tree cover.

We progressively eliminated lantana and replaced it with dense edge sealing equivalents, native of course. Land for Wildlife, for me, definitely has emphasis on Wildlife, so much of our species' selection has been about providing food and habitat. We have a creek of course but safe water containers in the garden are extensively used for bathing and drinking.

We have very clean birds!

Bottlebrushes and other nectar producing shrubs and trees bring a wide assortment of small honeyeaters. Banksias, particularly *B. robur*, bring the yellow-tailed black cockatoos.

However, they do need pruning lessons! Finding half a shrub on the ground means shrugging one's shoulders and thinking "Oh well, it will develop more branches and therefore more flowers". *Pipturus argenteus* is a favourite for its small succulent fruit as is Midyim, *Austromyrtus dulcis*.

The layered approach particularly in the garden, which merges into the revegetation, has attracted white-browed scrub wrens. The different levels cater for those preferring ground level foraging, up to those more at home higher up.

Once established a dense low edge also tends to discourage the scrub turkeys. They like more open ground in which to scratch. Trees with loose bark favour insect foraging, plus leaf litter and fallen timber are food for many invertebrates as well as habitat. Logs and rocks have catered for lizards and other ground dwellers.

Diversity at all levels has been an important focus.

It has been a fascinating journey, not quite over and we've learned so much along the way. Natural regeneration is now taking over.

We love seeing the wedge-tailed eagles soaring above the back paddock on the updrafts from the escarpment, or the almost resident goshawk flying at high speed through the trees. Wallabies are sometimes seen grazing well into the morning. The wildlife is such a joy.

My greatest pleasure is hearing a Noisy Pitta in the early morning or at dusk telling me to "Walk to work, walk to work!"

Those 20+years could not have been better spent!

Some life forms enjoying the persistent wet weather!



Triboniophorus graeffei



Sphaerospira fraseri



Stanisicarion aquila



Winter Seeders – The Patient Ones by Spencer Shaw

In summer, many seeds hit the ground and are putting down roots within a matter of days. Those warm balmy tropical days and nights are perfect for vegetative growth and seeds tend to establish themselves very quickly. Conditions for growth are at their best in spring and summer with the rainforest seed that fall wasting no time in their race for survival.

Sorry - drifted off for a second there thinking about warm balmy tropical days and nights as I huddle over my keyboard on a cool autumn night... Species like *Guioa semiglauca*, *Harpullia pendula* and *Argyrodendron trifoliatum* are classic summer seeders, germinating extroverts so to speak. They are the sorts of seed that can't wait to get out of their skins the moment they hit the ground, and then race for the sky!!! Their winter cousins can be somewhat on the shy side however, often remaining introverts until the warmth of spring tempts them to poke out a root node and make their break for the light.

In winter, temperatures drop and growth conditions for seedlings become less than favourable. Many seedlings that have sprouted during the warmer months and that haven't become sufficiently established may die off, and if these seedlings are struggling, how could seed falling in winter survive if they were to germinate?

The answer is often to postpone germination for the winter seeders. Many have growth inhibitors either chemical (e.g., the seed of *Acmena*) or physical (e.g., seed coats as in *Melia*) that allow them to lie dormant in the soil until warmer conditions return when growth is possible. This is when the investment of developing a seed that can survive the winter, pays off, because they are often the first to germinate when warm conditions return, and they then have little competition in the field (or at least the forest).

Two winter seeders to keep an eye out for, (but don't expect them to germinate overnight) are:

***Acmena ingens* – Red apple;** these beautiful fast-growing trees are dropping their large red fruit soon, and they are well worth the trouble of growing as they are truly outstanding. The fruit are about 20-30mm in diameter, so easy to spot and collect from below the tree where they fall. They can be sown, fruit and all, in a good potting compost, but benefit from soaking in water for at least a fortnight to drown any grubs that may be present. Personally, I allow the fruit to sit in a bucket until they have gone a bit mushy (some people just never grow up) and then give them a good stir and rinse until the fruit is removed, before sowing. A few decades ago, while collecting fruit out along Stanley River Road, I was fortunate enough to see several Coxen's fig parrot feeding on the fruit. Yes, I know they are extinct, and I imagined it, but just to be clear the ID was made by Dr Ian Gynther... Unfortunately, the tree was cut down during road widening so more reason to plant these beautiful trees if they are a source of winter food for a bird on the verge of extinction.



Acmena ingens

***Melia azedarach* – White Cedar;** these are a much-underrated tree from our local forests. Incredibly quick to establish and grow, providing a beautiful timber (for those in it for the long run), with small but very attractive perfumed flowers and a bird attracting fruit - but wait there's more. One thing that puts many people off the white cedar is their deciduous nature and the fact that they often are stripped by caterpillars just before they lose their leaves in autumn. The fact that they are deciduous should actually be seen as an asset e.g., perfect for the north side of a house by providing summer shade and yet allowing winter sun in. Also, they are great on a revegetation site providing quick cover (up to 4m in their first year) in the heat of summer and yet allowing light onto their neighbours during winter. White cedar is in fruit soon and the masses of yellow fruit are easy to see on the bare branches. The yellow fruit consist of a fleshy layer surrounding a hard stone that contains several small seeds. The hard stone protects the seed until warmer conditions return and they are often one of the first locals to sprout on a disturbed site in spring.



Melia azedarach flowers



Melia azedarach seeds

***Eupomatia bennettii* flower complete with pollinating weevils**

From Maria



How lucky is that – to get the flower and 2 weevils.

A Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo making a meal of *Hakea florulenta* fruit



From the Maroochy Regional Bushland Botanic Garden

Not only having a meal but destroying the shrub at the same time. It will not be given a job there as a gardener!



Banksias in my Backyard

By Diana and Eric

We have to declare that we are a bit keen on banksias. They first became known, in a European sense, in late April 1770 when Banks and Solander landed from the *Endeavour* on the east coast of Australia. They are all woody evergreen plants that range from prostrate shrubs to trees up to 25 m in height. All 75 species of banksia occur naturally in Australia with most species, 58, found in Western Australia. Qld has 9 species (*B. aemula*, *B. conferta*, *B. dentata*, *B. integrifolia*, *B. oblongifolia*, *B. plagiocarpa*, *B. robur*, *B. serrata* and *B. spinulosa*) and in SE Qld there are 7 (*B. dentata* and *B. plagiocarpa* are in north Qld).

The general attraction of banksias is their showy flowers that produce copious nectar which is able to increase the biodiversity of any home garden by attracting birds (a weakness of ours), moths, butterflies, many other insects and mammals.



Banksia aemula

When we moved onto our 2 acres in the Sunshine Coast hinterland in 2002 one of the few trees around the boundary was Wallum Banksia (*B. aemula*). Well known for its large fruit], reminiscent Of May Gibb's "Big Bad Banksia Man".



Big Bad Banksia Man



Banksia oblongifolia

The first banksias we planted were the Dwarf Banksia (*B. oblongifolia*) and Coastal Banksia (*B. integrifolia*) which have proved very successful in attracting a range of birds such as Blue-faced Honeyeaters, Noisy Miners, Noisy Friarbirds, Little Wattlebirds and particularly, Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoos.



Banksia integrifolia



Banksia integrifolia fruit



**Yellow-tailed black cockatoos feasting on
Banksia integrifolia cones**

We did try a Swamp Banksia (*B. robur*), being attracted by its metallic-green turning creamy-yellow compact flower brushes. The flowers are attractive to birds. However, our soils proved too dry and it did not survive a particularly dry year.



**Little wattlebird on
*Banksia robur***



**White-cheeked honeyeater
on *Banksia robur***



Banksia robur

About 10 years ago someone gave us the rare Dallachy's Banksia (*B. plagiocarpa*) which is only known from a few locations less than 30 km apart on Hinchinbrook Island and the adjacent mainland. It is now a small tree about 5 m in height, flowering well and also proving very attractive to the Yellow-tailed Black-Cockatoo.



Banksia plagiocarpa



Yellow-tailed black cockatoo on
Banksia plagiocarpa

Our most recent planting has been of another rare banksia that only occurs in the Glass House Mountains, on the Lamington Plateau and on Mt Barney appropriately called the Mountain Banksia (*B. conferta* var. *conferta*). It has grown to 3 m in height and started flowering.



Banksia conferta var. *conferta*

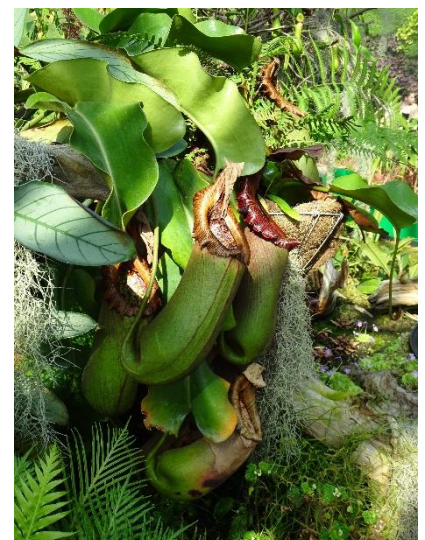
The Calyx Centre at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney

By Joan Dillon

While in Sydney last week I visited the Calyx Centre. This is a must visit part of the gardens, as themed displays are created on a long vertical wall and at ground level. Previous displays featured a bee theme with nectar producing plants, the diversity of carnivorous plants and this year coral reefs in the guise of succulents and cacti. A collaboration between horticulturalists and artists produces some spectacular results. The wall is constructed from thousands of small pot plants.



Each exhibit is also educational with video presentations for children and adults. Well worth seeing if you happen to be in Sydney and much to see in the rest of the gardens, particularly the very large old trees. I wonder whether my tubestock will eventually reach that size!





A Walk in the Park:
*a decade of bird and plant photography at
Myall Park Botanic Garden*

Welcome to this very special exhibition. In it we have tried to capture some of the many extraordinary aspects of the Garden during our regular visits over many years. It was a difficult task to choose just a few of the thousands of photographs we have taken. With these photos, however, we hope to provide you with a sense of place and feel for the Garden and offer a glimpse of the many plants, birds and animals that you might be fortunate enough to see here.

Photographs are a unique way of capturing both time and place. Some of the flowers pictured here have not bloomed since the image was taken. Likewise, some of the birds are single instances never to be seen again. What you have here is our curated experience of the relationship we share with the Garden.

This exhibition is a collection of those moments-in-time instances; ones that change with the seasons, especially in a natural garden like Myall Park Botanic Garden. It is a reflection of the specialness with which we both hold the Garden and its everchanging plants, elusive animals and fleeting bird-life.

We hope you sense the specialness too.

So, take a walk with us in the Park. Look closely. There is always something different to see: a new bird, a plant that has survived, another that has not, a flower that has not shown itself for years. Walk slowly and enjoy the images that surround you. Feel the sense of this being our go-to place to escape the everydayness of life. For, everyday in the Garden is a new and soul-restoring experience.

The photos have all been professionally framed and are for sale. All the proceeds are being donated back to the Garden. We would love you to support the Garden by making a purchase and although the photo will need to stay on display until the exhibition finishes, we have a number of options for getting it safely to you.

David and Theresa King



Myall Park Botanic Garden, Glenmorgan

Open Day Event - May 22, 2022

as part of the

A Walk in the Park Exhibition

of photographs by David and Theresa King

Free entry

photos on sale

all proceeds going to support the Gardens

Activities

11:30 am

An exhibition of photos taken by students from the surrounding schools followed by a sausage sizzle lunch for the students and school community.

1:00 pm

Bring a picnic lunch or purchase a gourmet sausage lunch and enjoy your own walk in the park.

2:00 pm

Meet the photographers and hear their story.

- View the exhibition and chat with David and Theresa
- Relax and watch the photo slideshow in the Gallery
- Take part in a discussion with Theresa about her photo journal which is on display

3:00 pm

Enjoy complimentary Afternoon Tea

Postponed
until June 19, 2022
due to flooding



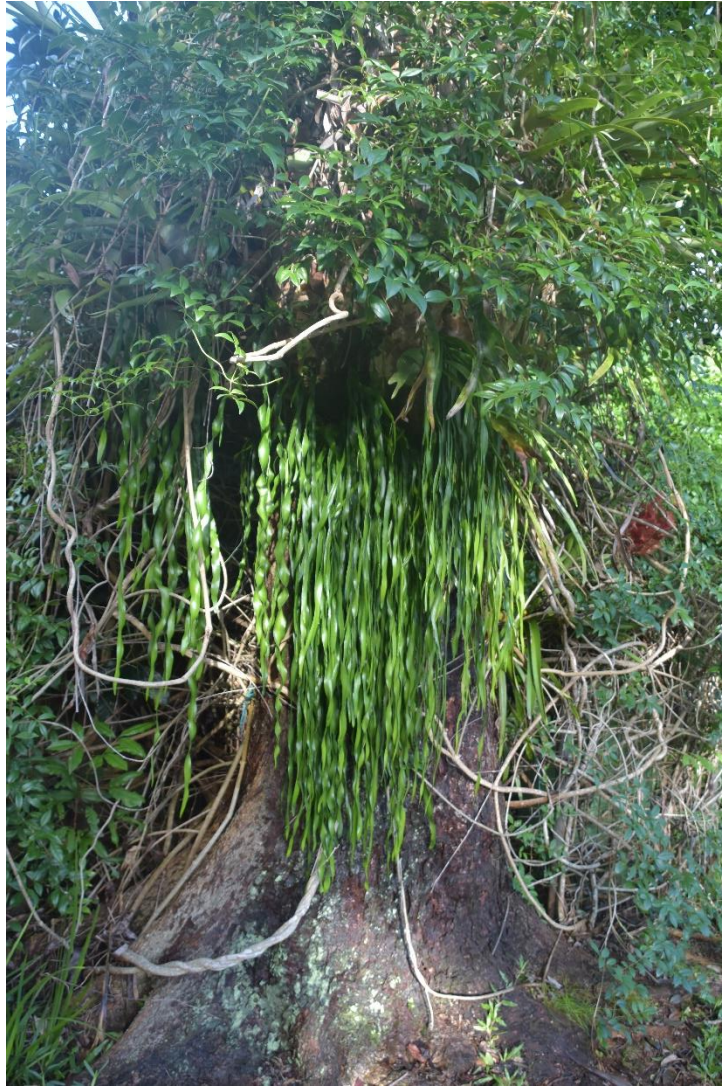
Supported by the Australian Government's Culture, Heritage and Arts Regional Tourism (CHART) program



Australia has a wealth of unique plant species, with many plants found nowhere else in the world. To protect these plants, we need to know what is happening on the ground, and how plants across Australia are faring against threats such as habitat loss, disease, fires and floods. Citizen scientists, bushwalkers and botany groups have on-ground knowledge of what's happening to plants in their area. A new citizen science project, Flora Connections wants to connect this community plant knowledge to conservation decision making. Flora Connections provides guides and a data sheet to collect information on plant species- where the plant is growing, how many plants there are and what the threats to the plant might be. Data can then be uploaded via the website to the Atlas of Living Australia, where it will be used by the scientific committees and land managers trying to protect plants across Australia.

Visit floraconnections.com to learn more, print out a data sheet and get involved!





Ophioglossum pendulum looking very happy – growing in an elk on a booyong, with the elk overgrown by a Pandorea vine

Thanks to Joan Dillon, Robert Price, Maria Rosenfelder, Greg Miller, Diana O'Connor, Eric Anderson and Spencer Shaw for their much-appreciated contributions to this newsletter.

End of Banksia Bytes 28

