



Wildplant Press

Spring/Summer
2011/2012

Newsletter of Katoomba Native Plant Nursery

The Bush Around My Place

By Veronica Paul

I live in suburban North Katoomba. "Not much interesting bush around there", you might think. You would be surprised! There are actually quite a few little pockets of bushland scattered amongst the houses and there is a very large reserve bordering Katoomba Creek. In the following pages we will visit a few of these sites to discover what kind of vegetation grows there.

We begin with my own backyard which has an open slightly NE aspect and soil which is sandy with a little clay and a lot of rock. Although the land around this area has been subdivided since the beginning of the last century there is still a lot of evidence of the bush land that once was here. Most backyards contain one or two tall *Eucalyptus* (*E. oreades*, *E. piperita* or *E. sieberi*) and there are many examples of Acacias, Hakeas, Leptospermums and Banksias to be found. The indications are that this was once an open forest.

Heading north we come to the eponymous street where, behind the Jehovah's Witness' Hall beside a tributary of Katoomba Creek, there is a strip of wasteland which, although very degraded, contains a wonderful variety of indigenous plants fighting valiantly against an exotic invasion.



Grevillea x gaudichaudii

The ground is covered by a dense carpet of *Persoonia chamaepitys*, *Grevillea laurifolia* and *Grevillea x gaudichaudii*. As we would expect when we see *G. laurifolia* and *G. x gaudichaudii* together, we find *Grevillea acanthifolia* growing nearby beside the creek. There are many Leptospermums – *L. grandifolia*, *L. polygalifolium* and *L. trinervium* and some which would appear to be

hybrids. There are Banksias, Hakeas and several tall Eucalyptus.

Continuing north from here along Victoria Street we come to a small area of bushland bounded by Thorpe Street and some church grounds. Without leaving the footpath we can see a *Hakea sericea*, a Waratah and many Leptospermums.



Hakea sericea

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Nursery Opening Hours

14 Oak Street
Katoomba

Tuesday – Friday
10.00 am to 4.00 pm

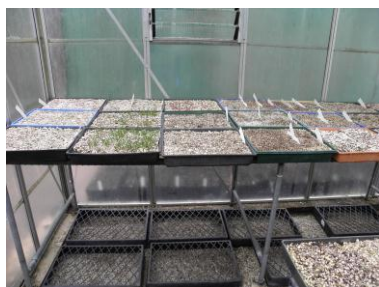
Saturday (Sept - May only)
10.00 am to 1.00 pm

Phone: 02 4782 6233

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Chairperson's report

Coffee Morning and Nursery Visit for Our Friends and Honoured Guests

Thursday March 22nd

On Monday prior to our morning tea Roza Sage MP brought Robyn Parker, Minister for the Environment, to the nursery for discussion about our aims, function and situation regarding funding. Robyn has since encouraged us to put in applications for grants. Mrs Louise Markus (Federal MP) has also given us support in our endeavours.

It was sunny on Wednesday, sunny on Friday and dull and drizzly on Thursday!

That is the way of the world, climate change and global warming!!

None the less we had an enjoyable time. In our efforts to raise the awareness of the local community to the importance and nature of our work. We invited friends and dignitaries to share time with us at the nursery.

Guests included Mrs Roza Sage MP and representatives from TAFE, Scenic World, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Bushcare, other good friends and Shane Desiatnik who kindly gave a very good report of the event in the Blue Mountains Gazette.

We were disappointed that no member of council attended.

Under a large gazebo (kindly lent by the Neighbourhood Centre) we drank coffee and ate tasty savouries (kindly provided by Sid of Luscious) and lovely cakes (made by committee members). Anne gave a welcome to our guests and a summary of the origin and aims of Blue Mountains Wildplant Rescue. Mrs Roza Sage MP replied and expressed her admiration for the enthusiasm of the volunteers, the organisation of the nursery and the ideals of Wildplant Rescue.

Guests were then shown around the nursery with explanations of how and why we functioned in different areas in order to produce the large number of seedlings which they saw growing on, and for sale in every vacant spot. The seed and plant data base also gave much interest and people were very impressed with our records of provenance.

It was very encouraging to see small groups of people chatting with interest in our work and supporting our efforts. We are very grateful to all those who joined us that morning.

We have been trying to obtain funding for nursery infrastructure, benches for trays of plants, an automatic watering system, a small moveable polyvinyl greenhouse and another heat bed. We shall keep trying!!

We look forward to busy times ahead with Tanya giving us plenty of seed to clean and tidying the nursery during winter.

Anne Rickwood (Chairperson)



Coordinator's report

Plants at Wentworth Falls



Well the RTA order is nearly finalised. Luckily they are running just a bit late and that gives us some more growing time to get a few more plants ready for spring. It has been good working with Kevin and the Conservation Society and hopefully one day something else like this will come up.

I am pleased to say that the Council is back on line with some fairly big orders coming in from them. It has helped that we had a lot of extra 'usual suspects' which we could put on sale. We have a few species that are still on sale. Also National Tree Day is very much reduced, but we are now on the Planet Arc web site for where to get native plants.

Green House



We have had a bit of disaster at the nursery after the big winds on Friday 25th May. A tree came down on our poor shade house, which now needs a fair bit of mending. Unfortunately there are still two trees in the nursery which look a little precarious and I guess these will be the next to go. Unless someone would like to volunteer to bring them down? They are not 'huge'.

We are a bit low on volunteers again with many being ill or away. However, being winter that is not such a bad thing. As usual we are short of very 'able bodied' volunteers especially for the Rescues. Alison and I now have white cards which means the next time the RTA or Sydney Water or any other such department rings us we can rescue on site!!

Thank you to Anne, Irene and Veronica for all the great work doing stalls throughout the year and to Judy for doing most of the Saturday mornings at the nursery. We have been keeping up our 'education' commitment and had a lot to do with schools, garden clubs and the like, informing them of our work and how we go about it.



Tanya McLean - Coordinator



Different Acacia's

***Acacia pickardii* – Mt Gason Wattle or Pickard's Wattle**



***Acacia pickardii* at Mt Gason**

Only recently discovered as a new Botanical species in the Mt Gason area in northern South Australia on the 24th December 1971 by John Pickard, it was not officially named until the 16th November 1978. Trees are found in clumps due to the tendency of this long-lived species to reproduce from root suckers. *A. pickardii* has rarely been observed flowering, but when it has been observed, the flowers are golden globular flower heads. It is not known to produce viable seeds, with seed set extremely poor, with no seedlings ever observed and only one or two seed pods exist in collections. Studies on the plants have shown that this wattle will not produce any seeds until at least 11 to 20 years of age. The only time that it has been observed flowering has been after rare heavy summer rainfalls. It grows on silcrete gibber flats and low stony rises. It is only found near Mt Gason Bore on the Birdsville Track and at Andado Station in NT and a few other locations.

***Acacia peuce* - Waddi Tree**



***Acacia peuce* near Birdsville**

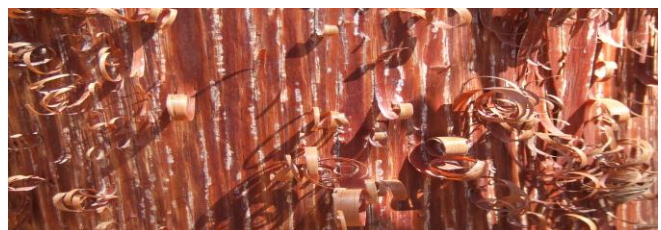
The waddy tree (*Acacia peuce*) is a slow growing desert tree found at Birdsville and Boulia in western Queensland and in the Mac Clarke Conservation Reserve southeast of Alice Springs. One of Australia's rarest plants, the Waddi Trees habit often conifer-like or sheoak-like have spiky, needle-like leaves and thick bark, pods oblong to narrowly oblong, to 20 cm long. The Waddi tree can live up to 1000 years. Dead Waddi Trees can remain intact, storing carbon and providing habitat, for at least 200 years – and likely much longer than that – after death? Waddis are a rare and ancient species. Its timber is so hard it has caused damage to axes and saws and when dry almost impossible to 'drill' Waddi wood fence posts have been found showing little decay after nearly a century. Waddi seeds were found in the diary of explorer William John Wills in 1860. Waddi trees are a protected species.

***Acacia cyperophylla* - red mulga**



***Acacia cyperophylla* on creek line near Cordello Downs SA**

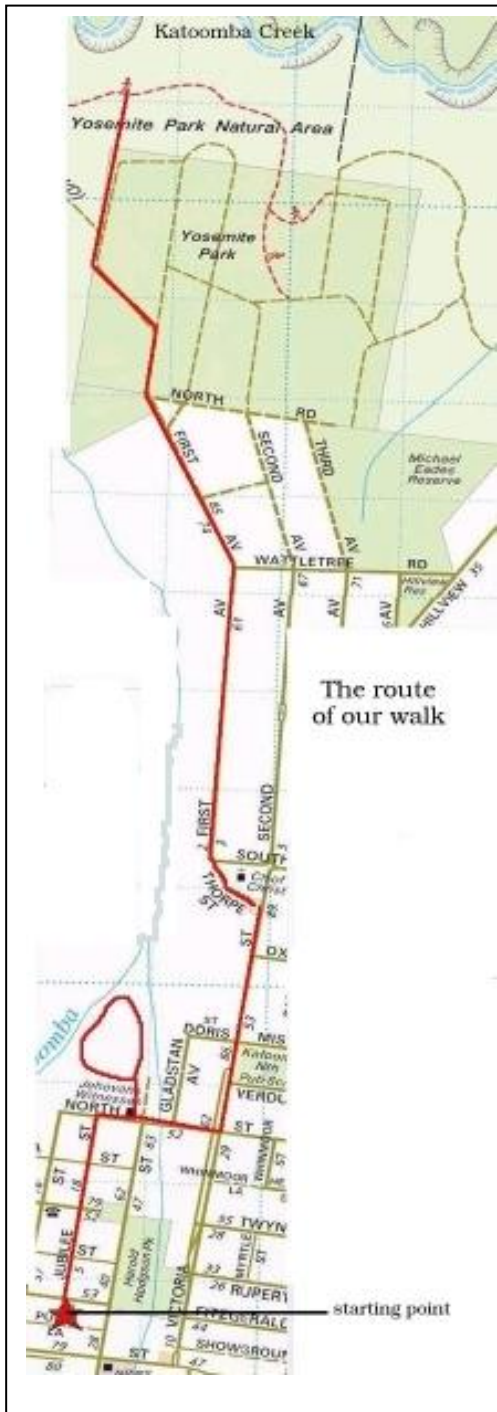
The red mulga usually occurs along creek and drainage lines and found on either side of the Simpson Desert but can never have occupied the dunefields. Common around Innamincka. It is a small shapely tree to 13 metres high. Bark is reddish and shed in curly strips. This is the most distinctive feature. Leaves are long and thin, pods are narrow, oblong and brittle.



Bark →



Treasurer's report



With the financial year almost at an end, it is pleasing to report that it has been a reasonable year. Our time has been taken up growing plants for the highway road widening at Wentworth Falls. Our coffers are looking healthy and we are now in a position to spend some money on upgrading the nursery by purchasing a few plant stands and to think about how to bring the tank water to these stands. This will ease the time we spend on watering the stock particularly in summer, if indeed we have a summer this year. It will also be good for our backs as we will not have to bend so much.

We had an unfortunate storm event in May. A large *Eucalyptus piperita* was uprooted and fell across the shade house which is built of modular PVC piping covered with plastic mesh. As the entire construction was ruined, and some *Blechnum nudum* and other fernstock destroyed, I am preparing an insurance claim which should see a replacement shade house installed in the near future.

The Bush Around My Place.....

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We continue our walk along First Avenue. All the houses on the western side back onto Katoomba Creek and many of the gardens are bordered by swampland. Towards the end of First Avenue we enter a bushland reserve which, although very much eroded by motor cycle tracks is still very beautiful, and contains diverse plant communities as there is a large hanging swamp above Katoomba Creek – this is a home of the Giant Dragonfly – and an equally large forest/woodland area. Half of this reserve, including much of the swamp was burnt in 2002. It has recovered well. The swamp is home to button grass, *Acacia ptychocada*, *Grevillea acanthifolia* and *Leptospermum grandifolium*. In the woodland we find *Lambrtia formosa*, *Persoonia levis*, several *Leptospermum* species, *Banksias*, *Hakeas* and many orchids.



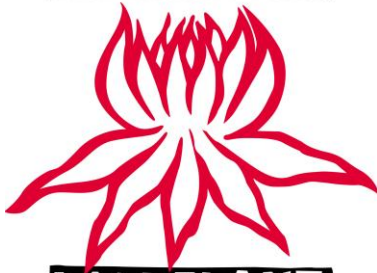
Banksia spinulosa



Lomandra longifolia



BLUE MOUNTAINS



**WILDPLANT
RESCUE INC**

**Katoomba Native Plant
Nursery**

14 Oak Street
Katoomba NSW 2780

PHONE:
02 4782 2633

Email:
info@wildplantrescue.org.au

We're on the Web!

Find us at:

www.wildplantrescue.org.au



**Members receive a 10%
discount on all purchases.**

Upcoming stalls and events

From June we will be at the following.....

- Leura 1st Sunday Markets held at Leura Public School
- Footlight Festival on 8th September, held at Katoomba North Public School
- Katoomba Golf Club – 7 October
- Back to Hartley – October

And starting again in Spring.....

- Blackheath – 1st Friday
- Wentworth Falls – 3rd Friday



About the service

Blue Mountains Wildplant Rescue Service is a not-for-profit, volunteer organisation whose aim is to help maintain the biodiversity of the Great Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

It was founded in 1994. Originally we rescued plants on bush block building sites before the bulldozers arrived. We now also propagate plants by seed and cuttings. We maintain a data base which includes record of the provenance of all our plants.

**Fees are due again
from 1st July**

All donations are Tax Deductible

Spotlight on a plant

Xanthorrhoea media:

Grass Tree

Ancient in origin and very slow growing, these lovely plants typify Australia and are the main Grass Tree of the Upper, Mid and Lower Mountains. They occur on the poor soils of the Hawkesbury and Narrabeen sandstones. Their majestic flower spikes may drip with nectar and attract many birds and insects.



We are very grateful to the Blue Mountains Gazette for the excellent monthly production of our "Plant of the Month" article in the Review.