



Wildplant Press

Autumn 2019

Newsletter of Katoomba Native Plant Nursery



Opening Hours

Tuesday – Friday
10.00 am to 3.00 pm

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

Phone: 02 4782 6233



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A word from the Coordinator.....

Hello everybody,

I recently went overseas using long service leave – wow, how time flies! I wish to thank Frances for covering for me whilst I was away. As well as the commitment of all the other volunteers.

Some interesting observations from my travels. I went to Mauritius, Madagascar, parts of Europe and England. Madagascar, Mauritius, Spain and Portugal are totally inundated with Eucalypt trees. It is actually quite depressing – and we think we have weed problems! Our guide in Madagascar even joked, when we went from one vegetation biome to another, 'We are now leaving Australia'!. The geology is quite different where the Eucalypts don't grow

Now, on to nursery stuff..... Things are very busy as usual.

We are currently upgrading the sales area at the front of the nursery. For years the area has been a bit of a hazard for both customers and volunteers. Luckily we have three very capable volunteers and the work is progressing very nicely, with designated paths and areas for the plants for sale being well delineated. Thanks to Colin, Peter T and John. As an adjunct to this we are also expanding the watering system to include that area. Thanks to Peter M. The only area not covered by a watering system of some sort is around the old glass house. So now in Summer the most one can spend on watering is a maximum of 2 hours, more like one. Gone are the days of taking four to five hours.

To show off our new works and how the nursery is looking these days we are having an open day **Saturday 6 April 2019**. Everyone is welcome. We will also be having a "working bee" on the weekend of 30 and 31 March 2019. Everyone is certainly welcome to come along to that, even if only for one of the days, or even just for a couple of hours.

We continue to have stalls throughout the year particularly in Blackheath and of course Springwood Foundation day is coming up so we hope to see some of our lower mountains members there! I think we will be doing Winter Magic Festival this year, although as you probably know, it will be very scaled down.

Continued.....



Vale Judy!

Judith Isobel McLean (nee Quinn) 1937 - 2018



Judy was born on 24, June, 1937, in Perth where she spent her childhood gaining a love of gardening and native flora from her mother and becoming a ballet dancer

In 1955 she married Arthur McLean (deceased) and they had two daughters, Gina (deceased) and Tanya.

Judy was a committed atheist and communist. The family moved to East Germany in 1964 where she worked as a translator. They returned to Sydney in 1970.

A family friend said "Judy lived an extraordinary life. She was variously a role model, a warrior, an activist, opinionated, feisty and sometimes a cantankerous curmudgeon!" She certainly made her mark on society and the many people she met.

As a feminist she was an active member of the Women's Movement. Being concerned with the welfare of women, she was involved with the instigation and running of the Leichhardt Women's Centre and later was, for 5 years, the first lay Director of Family Planning NSW.

In 1981 she spent a year in France to learn the language, and that led to the formation, with a friend, of The Small Hotel Company which resulted in much overseas travel.

In 1997, she and the girls moved to Katoomba but a year later she had the pain of losing daughter Gina to cancer.



With her love of the environment and native plants she soon found our volunteer group of Blue Mountains Wildplant Rescue Service. She worked as a volunteer from 1998 until 2013 during which time she shared her knowledge and skills, mentoring volunteers and giving talks at schools and local communities. She variously held the roles of Project Manager, Treasurer, Administrative Officer and Public Officer. In 2001 when our founder, Mikla Lewis, moved from the Mountains she said that she was reassured by the fact that BMWRS was in Judy's capable hands. Judy became well known to many for her extensive knowledge of the Blue Mountains flora and her friendliness and help to customers at street and market stalls and at the Nursery in Oak Street, especially on Saturday mornings.

When she left the nursery in 2013 she lived quietly with her daughter Tanya (our Nursery Co-ordinator since 2008) and was the friendly lady who walked around Katoomba with her little black dog Jax.

Judy died peacefully in her sleep on Friday 21 November, 2018 and she is survived by her brother in England and her daughter Tanya.

Sincere thanks to the staff at Bodington Residential Aged Care who looked after her so well during her last eighteen months.

Farewell Judy and Thanks for all you did
for us and the environment.





Coordinator's report continued.....

Rescues continue to be done, mainly thanks to Frances, but also Julie and we have been working with Council at various places around the Mountains doing rescues and seed collecting. Richard has been an integral part of this process. Often the rescues need identifying and labelling once they have become established.

This would be a fantastic activity for those of you wishing to exercise your botanic knowledge. There is always someone to join to do this and it is a fun way of getting to know plants! Feel free to ring up and make a time if you can help.

Recently we gave talks at the Wentworth Falls Garden Club and the Garden Appreciation Society at Glenbrook. Both generated a fair amount of interest and the response was very favourable.

We now have an active Facebook page so if you are on Facebook go and have a look. Verity has been doing a marvellous job and she also does most of the Saturdays. This certainly makes my life a lot easier!

I wish to point out that over the last couple of years we have been very fortunate in attracting new members to the committee, we even have Olga back! All new committee members are very welcome. I would like to pass on a special thank you, though, to Anne and Veronica who have put many years into the committee as well as the nursery in general. Their stamina and continued commitment is very, very, appreciated.

Tanya McLean
Nursery Coordinator.





Article One

Wildplant Rescue

What is Wildplant Rescue? Before we rescue plants we have to have permission from the land owner. We rescue local native plants from building sites owned by people who want to save as much of the vegetation as possible. These sites can be private house building sites, public sites, roadways or pathways and even the side of bush tracks for the council. Some plants are collected from private bush properties where the owner wants to remove seedlings from path ways or access points and have them transplanted to a good home.

Advantages The advantage of collecting wild native plants is that we can often collect unusual, or difficult, or impossible to propagate plants. Only a relatively small proportion of native plants can be propagated in a nursery situation. Many seeds will not germinate or take a very long time so are not of interest to commercial nurseries. Other plants cannot be grown at all even from cuttings or division. Some plants may be common but it is impossible to collect seed as it is too small to see or drops very quickly or eaten. The seed bank is often present in the natural soil in the rescue pots so often unexpected new seedlings appear months after the rescue.



Collection of seeds and cuttings We also collect seeds and cutting material from rescue sites and this further expands our collection.

Selective We are selective about which plants we rescue and do not bother with Acacias or Eucalyptus or Hakeas as these are easy to grow and easy to collect seed. We also have to consider the size of the plants. It is no good trying to dig up large bushes or trees. We dig up seedlings as single plants or collections of plants in a pot. We also know which plant species have a good chance of survival. There are also thousands of plants on a bush block so we have no hope of getting them all. Usually we go as a group to dig from a site and the best sites are when we can go back several times as we find that an hour and a half is about our maximum energy for digging and then we have to get the plants back to the nursery and watered before they dry out.

We also rescue orchids if they have tuberoids and small ground covers like *Goodenia bellidifolia* and *Dampiera stricta* and take them back to the nursery and replant them as single plants in tubes

Nursery care When we get the rescued potted plants back to the nursery we put them into a shady place and water well and then some Seasol to reduce transplant shock. Some transplants are more successful than others but we tend to get good results. Cooler weather just after rain is the best time and even better if rain falls after the rescue. We leave the plants for at least nine months and even longer for certain species to make sure that they survive as some plants take months to die.



What Tree is That?

Eucalyptus oreades

Common name Blue Mountains Ash

Medium to tall tree 30 to 40 metres.

This tree is a common sight growing in the tall open forests along the cliffs and valley sides of the upper Blue Mountains.



Its bark is smooth and creamy white decorticating in ribbons and usually there is a stocking of rough bark at the base of the tree.



Its leaves are concolorous, 10 – 13 cms long and 2-5cms wide



The operculum is conical, sharply pointed and about as long as the floral tube.



The fruit is 6-10 mm in diameter. The pedicel is shorter than the fruit. The disc is about 2 mm wide and slightly depressed.



Some views of the upgraded nursery.....

New drainage and pebbles on walk ways





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We're on the Web!

Find us at:

www.wildplantrescue.org.au

also

Upcoming stalls and events for 2019

- Working Bee at the Nursery – 30/31 March, 2019
- **OPEN DAY – Saturday, 6 April, 2019**
- Blackheath Stalls
Friday, 12th April Friday, 17th May
- Springwood
Foundation Day - Saturday, 27 April, 2019
- Katoomba Winter Magic Festival – Saturday, 22 June,
- AGM – 20 August, 2019

Spotlight on a plant.....

Crowea exalata



Small Crowea



This little shrub grows 70-90 cm in height and has narrow pale green leaves. The many beautiful pink flowers may be about 20 mm wide. They provide a glorious show for six months of the year from mid summer through to mid winter.

A sheltered position in sandy soil is the ideal situation but *C. exalata* will grow well in richer soil in half to full sun, with some care whilst it becomes established. It benefits from pruning in late winter