



WILDFLOWER SOCIETY
OF WA (INC.)

EASTERN HILLS BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

February 2019

P.O. Box 111, GLEN FORREST, WA 6071

Meet: Octagonal Hall, 52, McGlew Rd., Glen Forrest.
4th Friday of the month. Doors open 7.30pm for 8.00pm

Committee 2019

President: Alistair Adam

Vice President: Pam Riordan

Treasurer: Robert Atkins

ehbtreasurer@inet.net.au

Secretary: Sandy Stone

Minutes Secretary: Penny Hussey

Committee Member: John Bates, Lee Roberts, Fran Kininmonth

Email:

For all email contact to individual Committee Members (except the Treasurer) please use the WSWA's generic email:

eastern.hills.branch@wildflowersocietywa.org.au

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/easternhillswildflowersoc/>

Other positions

Excursion sub-committee: Fran Kininmonth

Hall garden sub-committee: John Bates, Janet Atkins, Joy Collins, Pam Riordan

Hall housekeeping (not cleaning): Joy Collins

Librarian: Fran Kininmonth

Plant sale subcommittee: Janet Atkins, Joy Collins, Mitzi Wehlack

Newsletter Editor: Penny Hussey

Propagation group coordinator/Propagation Group

Equipment Purchaser: Sandy Stone

Publicity Officer: Pam Riordan

Seed Cleaning Coordinator/Seed Bank Officer: June Barkman

To contact any of these persons, please use the EHB generic email given above.

Coming Events February

Thursday 7th February

Committee Meeting

4.00pm: Octagonal Hall

Wednesday 13th and 27th February

Seed Cleaning Group

9.00am Octagonal Hall

Plant Learners' Group

Same time and place as the PROPAGATION Group.

Friday 22nd February

Evening meeting

"Mistletoes

Tony Start

Mistletoes are fascinating plants that grow parasitically on a variety of trees and shrubs. One family, the Loranthaceae, often flower prolifically when little else is in bloom, and are very important food for birds and some invertebrates. The caterpillars of some of the Wood White butterflies feed on their succulent foliage. But, mistletoes can harm their hosts.

Tony Start grew up in Kenya, before the family moved to Australia. He studied Zoology and worked in the state government conservation field, much of the time as a scientific research officer in the Kimberley. He also spends a lot of time in Thailand, where he is compiling notes for a publication on the rain forests.

He will tell us about the two main families of Mistletoes in Australia – and perhaps in the tropics too. It should be a fascinating and entertaining talk.

Future Events March

Thursday 7th March

Committee Meeting
4.00pm: Octagonal Hall

Monday 11th and 25th March

Propagation Group
12 noon to 3pm, Octagonal Hall.
Bring your lunch

Wednesday 13th and 27th March

Seed Cleaning Group
9am Octagonal Hall

Plant Learners' Group

Same time and place as the Propagation group.

Friday 22nd March

Evening meeting

“Puffballs of the West and beyond – A natural and cultural journey around the world”

Arpad Kalotis

Puffballs are a fascinating and poorly understood group of fungi. Often enough when encountered they provide great enjoyment for children who love to give them a good kick and relish in the spore masses that are produced!

Puffballs, though, have much-valued roles in ecosystem health, and have also provided various cultures with sources of food, medicinals, decorations and dyes, and in some cases are of religious significance.

This presentation will examine the classification of puffballs today and then look at the role of select species in ecosystem function, and their use and significance in cultures around the world.

Arpad Kalotas graduated as a botanist at UWA in the early seventies and has worked in a range of natural and cultural projects throughout central and Western Australia. He has maintained an interest in fungi first sparked by a fungal foray in his student days to the hills of Mundaring Weir with the late Roger Hilton, formerly Lecturer in Mycology at UWA.

COMING UP - LATER

Plant Sale 2019

Saturday 11th May (9.00am -2.00pm)

Octagonal Hall

Please put this date in your diary. Further notices with more detail will appear in future Newsletters.

Is there anyone growing for the first time? If so, please contact Janet Atkins 9295 2954 or atkinsrj@iinet.net.au

All growers will be contacted soon regarding arrangements for this year's sale. As a bit of advanced notice the following dates are important :-

- Sunday 31st March for preliminary plant lists
- Sunday 21st April for final plant lists

These can be sent to both Janet Atkins atkinsrj@iinet.net.au and Mitzi Wehlack (for the catalogue and signage) sangrila@primus.com.au

Janet Atkins

BLUE SKY FESTIVAL MUNDARING

17th March 2019

EHB will once again be having a stall at this event, held at Sculpture Park, Mundaring. The theme will be related to plants used by black cockatoos. It is also suggested that there may be children's activities organised by the WSWA Education Sub-committee.

Please put the date in your diary and consider how you can help.

Attendance at Perth Hills Artisans Market

Rosie Brooks is organising a stall at these markets on behalf of the Wildflower Society. She will be selling wildflower-related artwork and hoping to enthuse people about joining our group. **Are there any other members who could help out, and perhaps bring along arts or crafts to sell? Please contact Rosie via the EHB email.**

There first two markets will be on Sunday 24th March, at Helena College, Glen Forrest, from 9.30am – 3.00pm.
Sunday 19th May, Norris Park, Perth, same time

Plant ID Workshops

At the end of the plant ID workshops last year, participants suggested that perhaps half-day events could be organised, that specialised in one family only, going into greater depth than was possible in 2018.

So, **what families do members want to learn more about?** Please list the **FIVE families you are most keen on, and send the list to Janet Atkins or Penny Hussey, via the EHB email.** We could then see what can be organised.

REPORTS

AGM

Friday 23rd November 2018

As often happens on AGM night, there were, sadly, not many attendees.

The Vice-President provided a report of the Branch's activities during the last year, including reports from the various sub-groups. The Treasurer provided an audited report and explained some of the changes that would come about because of the requirement to submit all the Wildflower Society's finances in a consolidated form.

The names of the new committee are given at the start of this Newsletter.

To end the meeting, Penny Hussey showed photographs of some of the wildflowers that can be found while exploring the ruins of ancient civilisations around the Mediterranean, remarking how a knowledge of plants can enhance the appreciation of historic sites – from squirting cucumbers to prophetic oaks, mandrake, capers and dragon arums. As well as Tuarts standing sentinel at a WW11 cemetery at Tobruk.

CONGRATULATIONS

Una Bell received an Ian Colquhoun Lifetime Award, from his wife, in memory of the work Ian had carried out through his commitment with Alcoa and Murdoch University. There were three candidates nominated for the Award, at the Swan ALCOA Landcare Program (SALP)

celebratory dinner on November 15th 2018 and all were from Jane Brook Catchment Group.

Sandy Stone

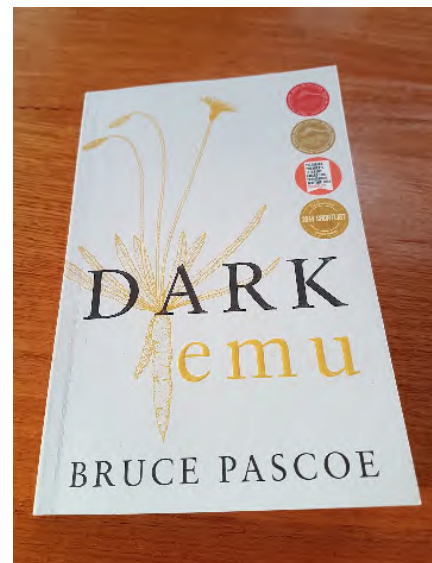
WANTED: Air-pruned pots

Have you bought seedlings in square air-pruned (forestry) pots? If so, have you still got the pots? Please bring them to the Hall, as our growers are dearly in need of them.

NEW BOOKS

Dark Emu

by Brian Pascoe

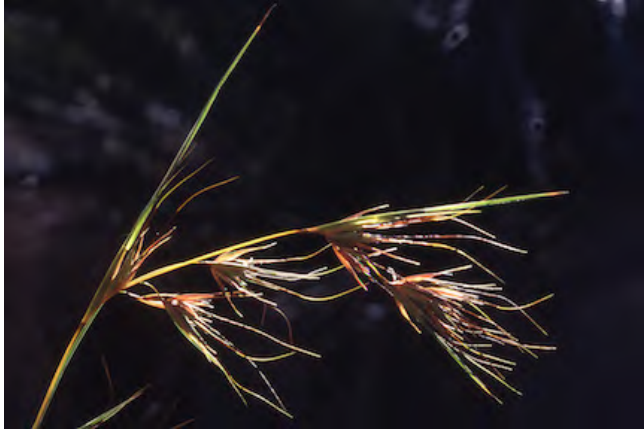


Brian Pascoe has written an engaging story of how the First Australians survived a hot dry and inhospitable country to survive 60,000 years. During this time they developed domestic crops from indigenous plants, built houses, fished, stored and preserved their crop, used fire, made tools and lived peacefully.

The book will dispel many of the myths Europeans and colonial explorers perpetrated about the First Australians. Through much research (there is a concise bibliography at the back of the book) the author suggests we need to reconsider the "hunter-gatherer" label for pre-colonial Aboriginal Australians.

The First Australians domesticated grains from grasses such as kangaroo grass by

“making changes to the genomes and habits of the plants simply through continuous interference in the plant’s growth cycle and selection of seed for harvest. This process, conducted over long periods of time, is what scientists call domestication” An advantage of growing native grain crop is it’s perennial, doesn’t need expensive fertilisers and only produces a crop when rainfall permits. Very little tilling is required.



Themeda australis Kangaroo Grass

Besides grains (which they were able to store when there was excess), Aborigines [in eastern Australia – Ed.] ate and farmed the native yam daisy, *Microseris lanceolata*, tests have shown the starch in this vegetable to be greater per gram than our humble potatoes. The yam was crucial native plant in the economy of pre-colonial [Eastern Australian – Ed] Aboriginal Australia and the front cover illustrates this important vegetable.

The sustainability of country, aquaculture, storage, dams and peacefulness of the First Australians surely must be taught in a very different way to today’s schoolchildren. The evidence suggests in this book that the First Australians were more than just “hunter-gathers”, ate more than witchetty grubs and were peaceful people.

We do our children a disservice by perpetuating these myths and not engaging in the true history of pre-colonial Australia. The First Australians were sustainable users of country, engaging in practices that ensured the land wasn’t depleted like the farming methods of today.

Sandy Stone

PLANT OF THE MONTH

Calothamnus tuberosus
Tuberous One-sided Bottlebrush



Out to the east of the Great Western Woodlands, growing out of cracks in rock outcrops, you will find an extraordinary and unique plant. *Calothamnus tuberosus* is the only plant in the Myrtaceae family that has tuberous roots, doubtless for storing water during the long summer dry periods. It also has stiff, upright needle-sharp grey-green leaves, papery bark, an attractive spreading growth habit and bright red flowers at Christmas time. Truly a superb specimen plant for anyone with granite on their property.

The photo is of a 10 year old plant, raised from Kings Park tubestock, growing in my bushblock at Helena Valley.

If you see a seedling, give it a go!

Penny Hussey

The views and opinions expressed in the articles in this Newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Wildflower Society of Western Australia