



April Newsletter

Australian Plants Society Wilson Park (Berwick) Inc.

Inc. A0028350T ABN 69 324 096 622

Website for Australian Plants Society Victoria is www.apsvic.org.au

Website for APS Wilson Park (Berwick) Inc. is

www.apswilsonparkberwick.org.au

Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/APSWilsonParkBerwick>).

LHI Stick-insect *– Alex Smart*



Having had the immense privilege of going behind the scenes at Melbourne Zoo with a friend who is a botanist. Her job to grow the plants required to feed all the butterflies and the critically endangered Lord Howe Island Stick-insects.

The LHI Stick-insect is considered to be the rarest insect in the world. It was common on Lord Howe Island until 1918 when rats were introduced from a ship. The rats devastated the population to extinction until some were seen on Ball's Pyramid, an uninhabitable rock poking out of the Tasman Sea about 20 km from LH Island. It is a weird nocturnal insect which grows up to 30cm long and was called by early settlers Tree Lobster or Land Lobster. Although edible it was more often used as fishing bait.

In 2006 some scientists collected a small number of specimens. They were shared with a stick-insect breeder in Sydney and Melbourne Zoo. After a shaky start our Zoo has bred lots however

LHI Stick-insect — *continued*

they cannot be reintroduced to LHI until the rats have been eradicated. There are plans and funding for this and it may happen in 2018. Meanwhile because it is such a rare animal specimens have been sent to Zoos overseas at San Diego and Bristol to ensure the gene pool survives. In 2015 we went to LHI and had a wild trip to Ball's Pyramid in a fishing boat.



Ball's Pyramid

SHOWS, CONFERENCES, PLANT SALES AND OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST 2017

18 & 19 April – Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Autumn Plant Sale
10.00am to 4.00pm. (Mel 133 K10) Cnr Ballarto Road & Botanic Drive, Cranbourne.

22 April (note one day only) – APS Geelong Plant Sale. 8.30am to 5.30pm. 'Wirrawilla',
40 Lovely Banks Road, Lovely Banks.

29 April – APS Mornington Peninsula. 10.00 am to 3.30 pm, at Seawinds, Arthurs Seat State Park,
Purves Rd. (note date change – 9/1/17)

29 April – APS Yarra Yarra. 10.00am to 4.00pm at Senior Citizens Centre, 903 Main Road, Eltham.

6 May – APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale, 9.00am to 1.00pm, Uniting Church Car Park,
Bacchus Marsh. (Mel 333 J6). This sale features genus hakea with large number of unusual species.
A full list is available approx. one month prior to sale and pre-orders can be sent to the secretary,
apsmeltonbacchus@gmail.com

11-22 June – ANPSA 12 day Natural History Kimberley Camping Tour. From Kununurra to Broome.
Contact Nicky Zanen, email nicky.zanen@hotmail.co.uk or phone 0401975191 for details.

4-9 July 2017 – Australasian Plant Society (UK) presence at 2017 RHS Hampton Court Palace
Flower Show.

22 & 23 July - Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Winter Plant Sale – 10.00 am
to 4.00 pm. (Mel 133 K10)

2 September – APS Wilson Park Plant Sale, Wilson Botanic Park, Princes Highway, Berwick. 9
am to 4.00 pm

2&3 September – Bendigo Native Plants Group Flower Show, Rotary Gateway Park, 26 High
Street, Kangaroo Flat.

9 & 10 September – APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo, Eltham Community & Reception
Centre.

7 & 8 October – APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall. 9.30 am to
5.00 pm.

Upcoming event at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

All-day Workshop 'Backyard Aussie Trees' Sunday 30 April 2017: 9.30 am-4.00 pm. Australian Garden Auditorium, RBG Cranbourne Gardens Cnr Ballarto Rd and Botanic Drive, Cranbourne Melway Map 133 G10 Friends Members \$65; Non-members \$70; Students \$30 When you look out and see the beautiful trees, is there much more than Wattles and Gums? Many of us are familiar with only a small percentage of native trees, this workshop aims to expand your idea of what is on offer. Come and broaden your tree horizons! Learn about all of the other wonderful species of Australian trees that we have and what you could add to your garden, even outside your own backyard. Once again we will have a varied group of presenters. We will learn about the evolution of these fascinating trees, how shrubs can become small trees and much more. Joining us to present will be:

- Professor David Cantrill, Chief Botanist & Director of Plant Sciences & Biodiversity at the National Herbarium who will take us through the developmental history of these fascinating plants,
- Dr Alistair Watt who has a deep love of conifers and their relatives will speak about Australian members of that group known as Gymnosperms.
- Dr Gregory Moore, highly renowned for his knowledge “of all things trees” will be speaking about the importance of urban tree planting in Melbourne.
- Rodger Elliot will lead us on an exploration of the beautiful Sheoaks and the Daintree Pine (which is not really a pine!)
- John Thompson will take us on an interesting trail through the social and cultural uses of our backyard trees.
- The day ends with a wander through the Australian Garden to come face to face with some of these treasures.

Bookings are essential: go to www.rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au click on Events and scroll down to Backyard Trees Workshop to download a Booking Form. Further information: 9725 3569.

Visit to Alison and Michael's property, Berwick

On March 26 members of our APS Wilson Botanic Park group visited the nursery and home of Alison Chatfield and Michael Curley in Buchanan Road, Berwick.

Their homestead is mud brick and designed to hold passive energy and the result is a very comfortable and sustainable home.

Walking into the garden our first sight was a row of mature Native Finger Limes laden with fruit. We were able to test the fruit, which when broken open the flesh resembles pale yellow caviar, but leaves an explosion of flavours in your mouth. Its taste is not as acidic as lemons but a more complex flavour.

Alison and Michael's garden is very diverse with a large vegetable garden, a tropical area with avocados in fruit, all sorts of fruit and nut trees and with an emphasis on permaculture. Companion plants and the method of using particular plants for various benefits were a main feature of this garden.



Celebrate Our Community Day

Friends of Wilson Park organised a “Celebrate Our Community Day” which was held at Wilson Park on Saturday April 1. The purpose was to provide a venue for non-profit community groups to present information on their activities. The 10-12 marquees were from groups promoting plants, library, woodworking, scouts, seniors and environmental activities.

Entertainment was provided by a folk group, Voices of Casey and members of a highland band.

Community involvement is important to encourage but limited publicity meant that the number of visitors was poor. Perhaps this could be addressed if future community days are proposed.



Australian Plants Society Wilson Park (Berwick) Inc. was well represented and we sold a few plants including some Kangaroo Paws for Cranbourne Friends. Gwen Elliot put Kangaroo Paw images on the funny hats.

DIARY DATES 2017

SATURDAY April 18:		Working Bee at Wilson Park.
SUNDAY April 26:	TBA	Visit to “Cardinya View” the property-nursery of Alison Chatfield and Michael Curley.
TUESDAY April 28	7.30pm	Committee meeting.
SUNDAY APRIL 16:	10-4pm	APS Wilson Park will be holding a Bunnings Barbecue as a fund raiser Easter Sunday.

*Thank you to Facey’s Wholesale Nursery
for their ongoing support in
donating plants towards our raffle*