

North West Group

Newsletter 469

May 2024



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After a very busy month with plant sales and outings May will be focusing on propagating plants for the Spring plant sale before the Winter slow down.

We'll look at the outing to Windsor Park and highlight our guest speaker for May meeting.

Any newsletter contributions welcome at my email address above. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this month's edition with write up's and photos. Regards Simon

MONTHLY MEETING: 16th April.

At the April meeting we reviewed how both the Autumn plant sale and our first visit to EcoFest went. Plant sales were good and a couple of new members have signed up which is great. All members are welcome to attend our meetings.

PLANT TABLE:

PLANT TABLE notes from the April meeting by Riitta B.

At this time of year we still don't have a great deal of plants in flower, but several Banksias are doing their best. I took in *Banksia brownii*, distinctive because of the feathery foliage. It is growing into a small slender tree in our garden. The shrubby form of *Banksia marginata*, on the other hand, is a dense rounded shrub up to two meters tall and three metres wide. I have been pruning it. Our *Banksia seminuda* is a tall tree. At present it is full of the red flowers. They glow when the sun shines onto them. The good flowers were too high up for me to reach, but the cockatoos had helpfully deposited two large flower heads on the ground for me. The flowers are about 20cm long.



Eucalyptus tetraptera is a small straggly tree, rarely above 3m in height, according to by old Eucalyptus book by Holliday and Watton. However, our "tree" spends its' time crawling on the ground! I have seen one in South Australia that similarly was prostrate. The distinctive features are the large square sided shining red flower buds. The leaves are large, thick and leathery, the largest of all Eucalypts. It is more of a curiosity, than ornamental really.

The most showy of our Hakeas, the Hakea Burrendong Beauty, is beginning to flower, and I was able to pick a branch with mostly open flowers.



THE HELICOPTER BUSH

Apart from the usual array of flowers John Tabor had the *Spyridium vexilliferum*, the Helicopter bush. He gave a talk about this very attractive small shrub. The name *Spyridium* comes from the Greek word *spyridion* that means "little basket". This refers to the specialised leafy bracts surrounding the tiny flower heads. *Vexilliferum* comes from Latin words meaning flag bearing. This describes the two or three conspicuous white bracts that are often assumed to be the petals. The common name "Helicopter bush" refers to the arrangement of the white bracts like the rotor blades of a helicopter.

(source: " Tasmanian plant names unravelled " by Wapstra & Wapstra)

The Helicopter bush also occurs in Victoria and South Australia.

It grows as a small shrub 0.5m - 1m high and wide, usually in sandy heaths, river banks and rocky slopes. Prefers full sun, good drainage and acidic soil. It is an attractive shrub for the garden, the white bracts, also called floral leaves, add interest over a long period.



ECOFEST April 2024

Notes on our EcoFest experience by Riitta B.

This year was the first time we had a stall at the EcoFest. This was a stall with three tables of plants, rather modest presence. As we had our main autumn sale only two weeks before, we did not have a huge quantity of suitable plant left. We installed our big banner, and John T brought two buckets of flowering branches from his garden for display. Unfortunately there are not many flowers out at this time of year. John also took in a couple of showy Banksia flowers. These were popular with the children and adults alike. People like the cuddly texture of the large flower heads.

Our stall was out in the open, on a grassy area. Fortunately the weather remained good. In a windy and rainy day, the experience would have been less pleasant. Three of us transported the plants and our tables on Friday afternoon, making the Saturday morning set up a lot easier. Our plant sale in the morning was disappointing, but developed into a steady stream in the afternoon. The location was a bit hidden behind a hedge from the main foot traffic.

Having a presence at these public events is always good promotion, but does require time and commitment. Some details I noted for possible future EcoFest events: there is a large presence of children, having items that are attractive for children is worthwhile. For example they liked to stroke the cuddly heads of Banksia flowers. Several adults enquired about edible plants, and interest in Tasmanian native plants seems to be increasing.

I wish to thank John and Mary for spending the Friday afternoon and all day Saturday transporting plants, setting up and manning the stall. The treasurer joined us for the Saturday morning. He was pleased that the "square" worked perfectly thanks to excellent phone reception at Camp Clayton site. I also need to thank Drew for acting as the contact/ liaison with the EcoFest organisers and suggesting that we need to have a go.



Saturday 20th April: Special outing

Saturday was a great day out at Windsor Park with Tony Roberts showing us around most of the Park. 15 members attended including 4 from the North West.

Apart from the big range of Tasmanian plants, everyone was impressed with the planning that obviously went into the landscaping.

The Park has most of the Tasmanian Eucalyptus and Allocasuarina species.

Tony kindly allowed the North West Group to take cuttings and Riitta, John and Peter French put them on the heat bed Sunday morning. Words by John T, photos from Mary S. and Peter F. thank you.





PROPAGATION AT THE ARBORETUM:

April was spent starting on the next crop of plants to replenish our empty area. The heat bed is full and there are lots of plants in the green house that will need potting on. So many that we'll be having an extra propagation session on Thursday 16th May. Thanks everyone for their help.



This is a hands on session helping, learning all about growing native plants from cuttings. It's a BYO lunch/drinks affair at The Tasmanian Arboretum, 'usually' on the Thursday after the Tuesday meeting. If new please contact a committee member for latest information on dates and location.

CALL FOR APST 2025 CALENDAR PHOTOS

Amanda Walker has advised that she would be very happy to produce a 2025 calendar for us. This follows a very successful 2024 calendar, containing only members photos, where we sold the 400 we had printed and received numerous accolades. As in recent years, the calendars were sold not only to members but also to commercial outlets, including Queen Victoria Museum, Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

Members are invited to forward photos for our calendar to Amanda. They will need to be provided by Friday May 31st 2024, to provide Amanda with sufficient time to do the selection, processing and arrangement of photos, for Christine Howells to edit, and for the printing to be done, to enable the calendars to be provided to commercial outlets by early September.

Please choose only Tasmanian plants which are the calendar's main focus but you can also include landscape (landscape format preferred), birds and fungi to add interest. If you have landscape, flora etc from one area of the state as a theme, this is welcome too.

We need your photos and hope many members captured great photos last winter, spring and summer or this autumn! It is suggested you look at this year's calendar to see how Amanda has compiled each page to get an idea of which of your quality photos could be used. Bear in mind that last year she had about 200 photos from which she selected the 60 that 'worked' artistically and provided variety, so she needs lots of photos from which to choose. If you missed out last year, don't give up – send your best.

Photos should be uncropped and preferably 4 to 5 megabytes, email is preferred and has worked well in past years. Amanda is happy to be contacted if you wish to ask if something is suitable, how to get it to her other than email or send a sample.

Amanda's contacts: Email: amandawalker7@outlook.com.au Phone: 0438 316 095



Upcoming 'not to be missed' events and dates:

Tuesday 7th May:

Planning meeting for the State get together in November. Meeting in Sheffield. Contact a committee member for more details if you wish to contribute.

Thursday 16th May:

Extra propagation session at the Tasmanian Arboretum starting at 10:00am until 2:00pm (or shorter time if that suits you better)

Tuesday 21st May:

Last Tuesday night meeting before the Winter change to daytime meetings, East Devonport Tennis Club rooms. 48 Wright Street East Devonport. Come along after 7pm for 7:30pm sharp start.

Guest speaker: Beck Drake from the Tasmania Wildlife Hospital will come and share details about the native animal care area running out of the Forth Vet Clinic. We'll look at the possibility of supplying plants for their animal recovery area and a property they are looking at regenerating. Very interesting talk for nature lovers. Beck's talk will start at 7:30pm. All members welcome.

Thursday 23rd May:

Normal propagation session, at the Tasmanian Arboretum starting at 10:00am until 2:00pm (or shorter time if that suits you better)

Tuesday 18th June:

June meeting is a DAY MEETING at the Arboretum Education Centre starting 11am. This meeting will be chaired by John Tabor.

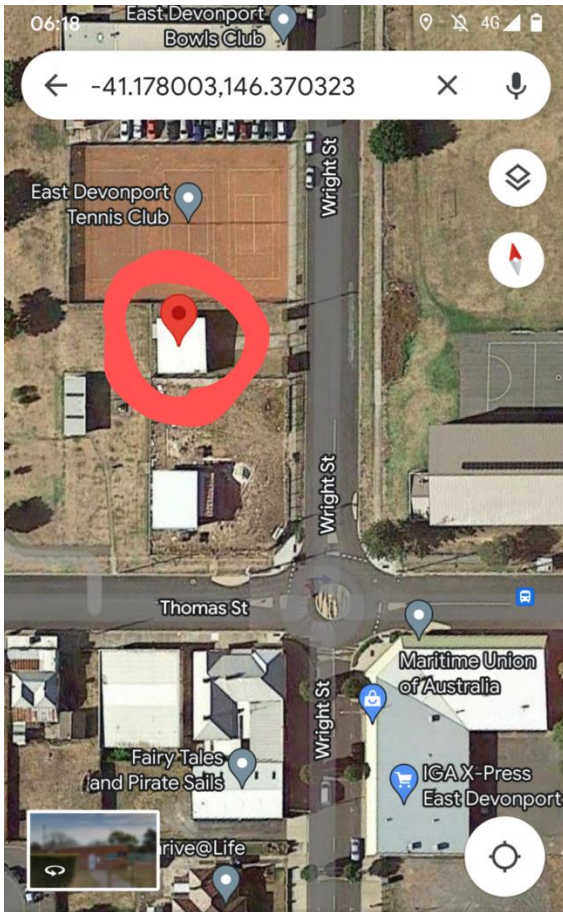
July: There is NO meeting in July. Propagation date to be confirmed.

August:

August meeting is also a daytime meeting on Saturday the 24th. More details to come later.

November:

November long weekend State get together organised by our group. Based in Sheffield with walks in the surrounding areas. Save the date for a fantastic weekend showing off our part of Tasmania to the two other groups.



Tuesday meeting 48 Wright Street East Devonport. Thursday propagation Tasmanian Arboretum

Tid bits and left overs (or should that be recyclables):

Flowering in Riitta and Jan's garden at the moment: *Banksia prionotes* & *B. paludosa*,



and lastly from Drew T's front garden *Hakea suavolens* now *drupecea*.

Hooroo Simon 😊