



AUSTRALIAN PLANTS FOR
CONTAINERS STUDY GROUP

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Correa 'Canberra Bells' blooming heavily in February 2021

We were involved in the choice of this shrub to celebrate the centenary of Canberra, 12th March 2013. This plant is reliably in full bloom for Canberra's birthday each year.

Correa 'Canberra Bells' is a small shrub, 1m x 1m, with red and cream bell-shaped flowers which occur from late summer through to winter. The leaves are small rounded and olive green in colour.

We have tried seven specimens of this shrub in the ground and these have not done as well for us as one we planted in a pot in March 2017. The plant in the pot blooms prolifically over a long period.

Perhaps mercifully, the plants in the ground were squashed flat by the fall of a pine in July 2016.

Leaders' Comments:

Stewart Lewis, from Victoria, informed us about the segment in Gardening Australia, broadcast on Friday 5 March, about 15 minutes into the program, where Dr. Tony Scalzo from Kings Park BG shows how to grow Western Australian plants in pots. Tony uses native potting soil and adds a good handful of Perlite to the mix. He noted that horticultural sand was a good substitute for Perlite. He then puts two or three different plants, such as *Leschenaultias*, together in a pot and tops with a mulch of clay pebbles. We use a similar system, except we use sand because we reuse the used potting soil in the garden and do not like the look of white Perlite in the ground. Also you should always wet Perlite before using and wear a mask to keep from breathing in the fine particles. The mixing of different plants in pots is very common in gardens in Italy and is very effective and not used enough.

Bill Aitchison, Member of Organising Committee, 2022 FJC Rogers Seminar, Mt. Evelyn, Victoria

Peas in containers

Each two years the Australian Plants Society Victoria holds a weekend seminar, the FJC Rogers Seminar, generally featuring a particular group of plants. The next seminar, to be held on the weekend of 15 and 16 October 2022, is on the subject Fabulous Peas (focusing on plants from the Faboideae sub-family). This Seminar is being organised by the APS Maroondah District Group and is being held in Mt Evelyn, in Melbourne's outer east.

As one component of the weekend, we are planning to have a display of peas in containers. There are two aspects where our Organising Committee would appreciate help from members of the Australian Plants for Containers Study Group.

Firstly, we would welcome any thoughts as to which pea species are particularly suitable for growing in containers, and any tips on how to successfully grow them.

Secondly, if there is anyone who may have an attractive specimen of a pea growing in a container, at the time of the Seminar, would there be a possibility that we could borrow this and include it in the display on the weekend? We realise that this is probably more feasible for people in Victoria than elsewhere. We would love to hear from you if you think you may be able to assist.

My wife Sue and I have had a few peas that have done well in containers – including *Bossiaea cordigera*, *Kennedia coccinea* and *Swainsona formosa*, but have not taken any decent photos.

The accompanying photo and detail of *Swainsona formosa* was taken by Bruce Schroder.



Charles Ferrugia, Sydney

Orchids in a pot

The original plant in the pot was a tree fern. When it died we left the trunk in the pot and planted the orchid over the trunk. The purple flowers belong to *Dendrobium* ssp (still the right name?). These were pieces that broke off the ground orchids and were either tied to the fern's trunk or just jammed between the dead trunk stems.



Eds. note: This plant is commonly known as the Sydney Rock Lily, but it is really an orchid. The correct name is **Thelychiton speciosus** but it was previously known as *Dendrobium speciosum* and is found in coastal regions growing on rocks and ledges. This plant does not tolerate frost but grows well (as you can see) in a pot in a protected location.

Anne Campbell, SA

Potted Native Plants

Adenanthos cunninghamii – Albany Woolly Bush

This plant has been in a pot all its life (7 years) – in fact in the same pot as is shown in the photograph. It was propagated by the Growing Friends at the ANBG, Canberra.

This plant was in Canberra for its first 5 years – at the edge of a west facing pergola in a Flynn back garden starting off at about 15 cm in height and now reaching 1.1m H – with light to minimal pruning. In 2019 it was transported to Mount Barker in the Adelaide Hills and has been in a north facing courtyard since then. Throughout its life, it has been on drip irrigation. The flowers are hardly noticeable to the human eye – very small. However, little birds, eg New Holland Honeyeaters, can certainly discern when it is in flower; indeed only the other day (mid Feb) a small flock of them descended on the plant.

The description of it is: “A small shrub 1-1.3mH x 1mW, with soft silvery-grey foliage. Tubular, dull crimson flowers, often partly hidden Aug-Feb. For acidic sandy soils in sun or semi-shade. Heavy frost may cause damage.”



Ros and Ben Walcott, Canberra

Banksias in pots



Banksia lindleyana (photo above left)

We planted this shrub in May 2009 in a large pot. In the ground it will grow to 3m high, with grey fissured bark, yellow flowers with a red base, and hard fruiting cones. This plant is native to the area around Shark Bay, WA, growing in deep yellow sand on plains and in tall open shrubland. This plant is very popular with both birds and insects when in flower.

Banksia menziesii (dwarf) (photo above right)

We planted this banksia, with toothed leaves and pink-mauve flowers in winter, in a pot in March 2010. This plant grows to height 2m, width 2m, and is native to the central west coast of WA.



Banksia victoriae - Woolly Orange Banksia (photos above, young bud to full flower)

We planted this banksia in a pot in November 2013. *Banksia victoriae* is a tall shrub to about 5 metres high, with linear leaves, deeply lobed, with triangular teeth and orange, 'acorn shaped' flower spikes. This plant grows in sandy soils in a restricted area northwest of Geraldton in Western Australia. The plant in the pot is smaller but flowers profusely in autumn currently having about 8 cones. The pictures above, all taken at the same time, show a small bud on the left, maturing to an attractive felty white and then turning orange from the base upwards. We move this plant and the other potted banksias under the eaves for the winter, while in the warmer months they are in full sun.

Geoff and Jannie Lay, Victoria

A Variety of Mountain and Western Australian Plants in Pots

We have two different sets of pot plants in our garden in Melbourne. The first group come from mountainous regions; they are kept on the east side of the house so that they only receive the morning sun. There are about 10 pots from Tasmania which we can keep alive, but producing flowers is another matter altogether. *Epacris gunnii* is kept with this group – it is a double flowered form, *Rhododendron viriosum* and *Paphia meiniana* from the Atherton Tableland, and *Blandfordia grandifolia* from northern NSW. The latter is now 24 years old and flowers prolifically most years around Xmas, but has never set viable seed.



Left: *Blandfordia grandifolia* 1997

Right: *Dampiera diversifolia*



Left: *Epacris diversifolia* 2016

Right: *Eremophila abietina* 2017 (Eds: we too have grown *E. abietina* in Canberra near the house under protection and it does well.)



Left: flowers of *Verticordia grandis* 2019



Verticordia grandis 2019 plant



Rhododendron viriosum 2001



Left: *Paphia meiniana* in the Lay garden



Right: *Lasiopetalum* 'Bronze Velvet' at the Walcott's front door

Stewart Lewis, Victoria

I live in Warrandyte and we have found it very hard to grow plants that don't like clay. I decided to grow plants that like good drainage in pots. We have been successful by using native potting mix blended with 25-30% washed river sand.



Left: *Banksia* 'Birthday Candles'



Right: Boronias

Plants we have potted to date are: *Banksia* 'Birthday Candles', *Crowea exalata* (standard and dwarf), Kangaroo Paw (tall & tough), Boronia brown and yellow, *Acacia cognata* (dwarf) and Flannel Flowers. The Boronias have grown really well having doubled in size and I think it's because of the mix and having them shaded and out of the wind. The Banksia has already started a couple of new flowers. The Croweas love the heat and are flowering now. The Acacia has lost leaf density so not sure what happened there? The Flannel Flowers have done well too, being purchased as tube stock and trebled in size although not many flowers to date. The Kangaroo Paw doubled in size and had a couple of flowers. Much higher success rate overall than in our garden beds!



Left: *Crowea exalata*



Right: Flannel Flowers

Fran Middleton, Canberra

An Australian Christmas Tree



Over the years I have decorated various Australian plants as Christmas trees - Callitris, Wollemi, and even a rather shapely dead branch one year (all outdoors). This WA plant, *Adenanthos sericeus* (Woolly Bush) is several years old, potted up each time it outgrew its space. Although I have seen them planted in Canberra gardens occasionally, doing quite well in spite of frost and clay soils, I have been reluctant to do that. Keeping my Woolly Bush in a pot allows more control of drainage and I am able to bring it under cover during a harsh winter. Winter 2020 was very mild here so with fingers crossed I left it on the edge of my south-facing porch under minimal cover and it suffered absolutely no frost damage. By December the plant was looking gorgeous and begging to be given a turn at being the Christmas tree. My two helpers were happy to rummage through my ancient decorations and as is their carefree style, tinsel and baubles were sort of 'flung' at the tree and branches twisted by little fingers. The Woolly Bush did not seem to mind such handling at all - after all, that is what such a tactile plant seems to attract. With the festive season now over and tinsel and baubles packed away, I see that it is growing its own tiny, subtle decorations.



Eds comments: Spinebills love the flowers of Adenanthos

Ros and Ben Walcott, Canberra

Interesting Plants in Pots



Brachychiton bidwillii - Little Kurrajong (photos above)

This brachychiton was planted in a pot in 2013 and has grown to 3 metres tall. Little Kurrajong needs protection from the frost as it lives in dry rainforest from southeastern Queensland to Bowen in the north. The foliage is one of its distinctive features with five lobed felty leaves reminiscent of a human hand. The flowers are bell shaped and coral red, coming for us appropriately at Xmas. Flower production is supposed to increase with age, so we are looking forward to even more flowers.



Gossypium 'Flirtatious'

We recently planted this very attractive cultivar of *Gossypium* which flowers in the warmer months with large pink flowers



Hibiscus geranioides

We planted this hibiscus, 0.3-0.6mH high x 0.3-0.5m wide, with dark green, lobed leaves and large pink flowers, in October 2015. This is a charming plant and we have propagated it several times.

Pam Russell, SA

Thought you might like to see these photos of my Australian native orchids. The *Dendrobium speciosum* was taken in my backyard where they grow under the shade of trees (photo on the left below). That photo was not taken last season as they did not flower then, it was the year before when they did so well as apparently they don't flower every year.

But my other species, *Dendrobium x delicatum*, which is in my shade house has flowered every year so far. I take it out of the shade house, when it flowers and put it under the carport where I can see it more often (photo below right).

I do love my native orchids.



Rowan Ward, Canberra

No real notes to say except that they all love sitting out on the eastern deck in the warmer months where they get morning and late afternoon sun. The Xanthostemon goes back in the hothouse for winter of course. I haven't tried the Regelia on the deck over winter but will give it a try.



Xanthostemon 'Fairhill Gold'



Regelia megacephala



Syzygium 'Aussie Southern'



Homoranthus papillatus



Unknown *Brachyscome*

Ros and Ben Walcott, Canberra

***Lechenaultia biloba* 'Sky High'**

Planted in a pot in 2019, this plant, 50cm high and wide, has large sky blue flowers, soft grey foliage, and is native to the foothills of the Darling Ranges of WA. The plant needs full sun, sandy, well drained soils and ample air movement. Beautiful colour.



Please send us your thoughts comments and ideas and when we get enough, we will produce another Newsletter.

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