

ANPSA

Correa Study Group

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LEADER'S COMMENTS

Hello everyone,

Flowering of my correas has really taken off just in the last few weeks. I visited Joan's garden in Ararat 6 weeks ago and was impressed with the large number and amount of flowers. My own garden had lots of buds but little in flower due to the dry first few months of the year. But now in May it is a different story.

Flowering times:

This is a very diverse subject- the actual timing of flowering of the vast number of different correas. I think at one stage I tried to encourage everyone to keep a list of the correas they grew drawing up columns for the months besides each one. Then making a code (e.g L for Light flowering, H for heavy flowering) and checking their plants on this master sheet. Did anyone do it? If not, why not start- it doesn't matter when you start, just keep a check on your correas- perhaps doing this on the first day of the month. If you do this it makes it so much more interesting to compare flowering times from year to year- then if you really want to do this in a formal way, then you can work in rainfall patterns as well and seeing if this is the critical factor in triggering flowering times. (We probably know this already but don't have the data to back it up.) After all we are a 'Study' group.

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WELCOME TO RUSSELL DAHMS

Russell will look after the newsletter and memberships after June, and is introduced on page 2. To contact Russell:

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SUBSCRIPTIONS are due on 1ST July and should be sent to Russell at the above address. A form is attached.

CORREA CRAWL (page 7) - please advise Barb or David Pye if you are coming (contact details in newsletter header, above).

RUSSELL DAHMS PROFILE.

Russell will take over general administration and newsletter from Barb and me at the beginning of July. The increasing demands of the Melton Botanic Garden have made it impossible for us to continue our administrative role, although we will still remain members. At our request, Russell prepared the following introductory note.

"I am now over fifty and my interest in native plants began with an article on the ABC TV gardening program many years ago that displayed the *Verticordia* genus in all its guises. The program inferred that a large range of these plants would be available at the local hardware store or plant nursery. Imagine my surprise when I went down there and discovered that they had no idea what I was talking about.

What followed was several years of collection of the *Verticordia* family including many trips to Western Australia.

During this period my interest in plant propagation increased with an emphasis on growing plants from cuttings.

That was almost 12 years ago and since then I have become one of the main growers for the APS – SA Region plant sales held twice yearly at the Wayville showgrounds in Adelaide. By using the techniques I have now learnt including bottom heat and coco peat I can now get a high percentage strike rate of my cuttings at any time of the year.

Most of the plants I propagate are from Western Australia and there are still many species I find frustrating to strike.

Recently I extended my collection to include *Correas* and now include about 30 species of *Correa* in my plant propagation – hence the reason for joining the study group.

My other major project is the development and release of the APSquery product – an interactive native plant database – info of which can be found at <http://www.users.on.net/~rdahms/>

For my day job I work as a Biomedical Engineer in a public hospital."

LEADER'S COMMENTS (continued from page 1)

Correas in my garden enjoying great and heavy flowering in mid-May are

1. C. 'Ice Maiden'. This is an unknown cross between *C. alba* and ?. It is a hybrid introduced and marketed by Native Plant Wholesalers (whom we will visit on the *Correa* Crawl) who produced their own pictorial label. The photo in Maria Hitchcock's *Correa* book on pg 58 doesn't do the flower (or the shapely shrub) justice as it has a delightful upturned flower in a delicious pink and white. It is a far better plant than C 'White Tips' in our garden. It has many more flowers and they are larger and showier. However, it has taken a number of years for the bush to develop and the flowering has got better and better each year. It has now spread 2 metres wide and 1.2 metres high with many fine branches well spread and so makes a lovely garden plant. Each flower is shown off - and it is covered with buds and flowers. It will flower for months.

Joan did mention however that it was not a good plant in her garden.

2. C. 'White Delight'. This is another *correa* developed and marketed by Native Plant Wholesalers of Mt Gambier. Maria's book notes that it is a *Correa alba* var *pannosa* but to me it is more of a straight *C. alba*. It is a vigorous spreader with vigorous flowering in a clear white and for an *alba* quite large flowers. It was a mass of flowering in March which was superb whilst it lasted- there is hardly a flower now just 5 weeks later. One of the first to flower this year. I believe those of us who grow members of the *C. alba* family are richly rewarded.
3. I am growing three of the Bywong Nursery (www.bywongnursery.com.au) *Correas*, two of which originated from the breeding program of Peter Ollerenshaw - a few years ago now. These three are C 'Green Dream' (late but prolific), C "Catie Bec" (just lovely) and C 'Jezabell' (really

great too) and have been very impressed with these three this year. How have other members found them? All are distinguished by the large number of flowers- none are what you might even call large flowers but they make up for that by having lots and lots of really beautiful flowers.



Correa "Green Dream" (from Bywong website)



"Correa Catie Bec" (from Bywong website)



Correa "Jezabell" (from Bywong website)

Members who have lost plants:

It is devastating to read of the huge losses of correas from a wide area and we remain as puzzled as Brenda Moore in the last Newsletter who has lost so many correas no matter what the elevation, amount of sun and any condition. Perhaps it may have been an unknown infection after all? The Myrtle rust is doing its damage in many places but perhaps there is something similar which has happened to our correas? Should we call in the big guns who may be able to shed some light? Correas losses are not right across the board though- this is what makes it so frustrating. And it was so sad to read the letter from Adele Kellett in the last Newsletter who has dropped her APS membership due to huge losses of plants last year and she has turned to planting exotics instead. She did have a lot of her garden flooded severely though and that appeared to be the major factor in plant losses. I remember about 15 years ago when we were flooded too and hundreds of fairly well established natives succumbed quickly- it didn't put me off though and the area now is well established and thriving although I had to replant one area three times!! Message here is – don't give up. Keep taking cuttings- isn't it such a thrill that correas propagate so easily from cuttings?

Look forward to catching up with some of you at the Correa Crawl.

Cherree

GRAFTING CORREAS by Phil Hempel

The success of grafted Correas that survived the very wet period that killed off many others that were growing on their

own roots, made me look at alternative root stock other than *C glabra*. Even in the wettest areas of the garden *C glabra*

survived but was knocked back severely to the extent that they were better pulled out and replaced. Correas that were not affected by the wet were *C glabra* hybrids, *C backhouseana* and *C calycina*. The hybrids had been used as root stock previously and worked well but *C backhouseana* had a thicker and softer stem to work with and made the mechanics of getting the scion attached easier. *C calycina* was trialed also because it is softer to cut than *C glabra*.

C backhouseana was slow for the grafts to take and the success rate was lower than I had achieved with *C glabra*. However it turned out to work with another rutaecea species, *Dodoneae angustifolia*, but since *D angustifolia* is notoriously fickle over the long term, this

has to pass the time trial. *C backhouseana* was successful with a small trial with *C pulchella*.

C calycina proved to be just as successful as *C glabra* and offers a few advantages, it's easier to work with and it is much quicker to strike as cuttings. The advantage of grafting many species, especially rare or unusual ones is I feel much happier and confident planting out grafted plants than I do with plants on their own roots. At this time of the year it looks wonderful when all the *C reflexa var speciosa* (especially "Big Bob") that I planted out last year, have grown well and are in flower. These are at the top of my best small native plants and are a stand out with many large, red, bulbous bells glowing in the garden.

LETTERS FROM MEMBERS

from Joan Pitaro

In Ararat we continue to wait for a decent rain as we have missed out on most of the rain events that have occurred- they have been all around us. For us Summer has been very dry and the soil continues to be too dry for planting in areas that won't be watered.

The correas in my garden seem to have survived last summer's wet and now our dry better than those of other Grampians APS members. Many lost significant numbers of Correas (and Banksias) throughout the year. The only plants I lost were the *C. Candy Pink* plants that died one by one soon after January rains. The difference is that I have clayey soil while most of the others have deep sand. Generally my established correas have survived Summer without any supplementary watering but *C.Raelene Goldie* and *C.Coconut Ice* have both had branches die due to becoming too dry. The dead parts have been pruned out and I am still considering whether to replace the bushes or see if they thicken up. The same thing happened to *C. Marions Marvel* during the drought and I pruned it back quite heavily. It has grown back very well. I also find that *C. Ivory Dancer* likes some water during Summer I have lost 2 plants during dry summers and only just saved the one I have by watering it.



Many of my correas are now in flower but the flowers are not as robust as they would be had we had more rain. Some of the cuttings I collected during our last Correa Crawl now have flowers and look very impressive so I hope they continue to grow well. Some of the *C. reflexas* have very big flowers. Also in flower are plants of *C. reflexa Weecurra* form (SW Vic). The flowers are orange-red with yellow tips and the couple of plants I have are growing well.

One of my more recent purchases has been *C. Catie Bec* and what a beautiful plant it is. I first spotted a plant outside the Laundromat in Ararat and was very impressed with the flowers so set about finding out what it was and buying one. In 6 months it has grown well and is in full flower.

I have a number of seedlings about to flower so I am looking forward to seeing how they turn out. There is always something to look forward to in a garden.



C. reflexa Portland

from Brendon Stahl

In a particular area of my garden, I have had forty correa seedlings come up and I have potted them up in the hope there may be a special hybrid. There was a *Correa calycina* and a *Correa glabra* growing in that area.

Since I had my heart attack, we have decided to sell our fourteen acre property and I have been busily trying to propagate as many

plants as possible including my collection of correas. As most of the soil on our property is sandy, we have been able to grow a variety of plants including about fifty species of banksias. There may be a member who may wish to purchase our property.

from Bob O'Neill

Our new garden at Narre Warren South after a year is now settling down. The flattish acre site with fine, poorly drained grey, sandy loam has taken its toll on the initial plantings, wet feet accounting for about half of the plants.

Amongst the worst affected were the correas. The reflexas fared badly, the pulchellas somewhat better, while the lawrencianas have done well. Oddly, we have done well with eremophilas. Where possible, cuttings have been taken to conserve what is left, and we simply have to adjust to life as it is, eg use more water tolerant species, apart from making some structural changes such as raising garden beds.

Initially we brought in 40m³ of soil to raise garden beds. That simply was inadequate, so over the past weeks we have barrowed an additional 70m³ of soil to raise existing raised beds, plus formed new ones, somewhat

transforming the appearance of the property. Ideally more soil should be brought in, but Rome was not built in a day. In due course, as the larger plants mature, some of the flatter areas will experience micro climate changes, which will assist correas to grow in those areas as well, but that is some distance off yet.

To maximize the value of the raised beds, considering the monetary, time and effort costs, a range of smaller species dominate the raised bed plantings, including *Correa pulchellas* which now form a special interest group. We would very much wish to patiently expand their numbers over time, but if anyone is able to help out with some additional forms, that would certainly be much appreciated. Selected, favourite forms of *C reflexas* are also to be scattered freely about the mounded beds. As with most plants, there

will at least 2 plants of each correa form grown in the garden.

Despite our setbacks, the garden has progressed markedly over its first year. An *Acacia cognata* is now 2m tall and numerous plants would be in excess of 1m. A recent

check of the garden revealed 50 species of plants with some degree of flowering. Our bird count is now at 25 species and the 2 little dogs are doing fine. Life could be a whole lot worse.

from Corinne Hampel

A friend has had numerous *Correas* drop dead virtually overnight. Particular ones have been C 'Mannii' and C Wyn's Wonder (the one with deep pink flowers and variegated leaves). My friend was trying to re-establish plants after the drought here and has had quite a bit of disappointment. The plants were 2-3 years in the ground. I wondered about

non-wetting rootballs, and root competition from the trees under which they were planted. The C 'Mannii' died at the beginning of spring. Does any one have suggestions as to the cause of death in *Correas*? We had a very mild spring last year, unusual because we often have days in the high 30s, and usually quite dry.

OUR CORREAS by Barb Pye

It has been a really good flowering season for our *Correa pulchella* varieties this year. We have 3 prostrate forms with orange flowers which look pretty much identical.

They were obtained under the names of Mallee Fire, Autumn Blaze and Wreck of the Ethyl. We are also growing a low growing form which we obtained from Bob O'Neill which he called Remarkable Rocks – it has a small dark green leaf and a really bright orange flower.

nicely and is starting to flower. *Correa Little Cate* has been flowering profusely for a few weeks now - it started off quite upright but now has a spread of about 1 metre and is about 40cm high.



Our *Correa Western Pink Star*, which is a form of *C. alba* var *pannosa*, has flowered better than ever before – this variety flourished in the wetter seasons unlike our *C. alba* var *alba* which almost all died. Like Cherree, we are growing *Correa Jezabelle* – a relatively new plant which has established



Correa Maja's Miracle has the reddest flower of the *C. pulchella* varieties that I have ever seen. It survived the wet season quite well and has several flowers and copious buds at the moment. It is more open in habit than our other *C. pulchellas* – quite a dainty plant.

Thanks Cherree for a really interesting *Correa Crawl* program – I can hardly wait.

This will be our last newsletter. I am sure that you will enjoy reading Russell's newsletters from later this year. Thanks to all our correspondents.

CORREA CRAWL, June 2012: Sat 9th - Mon 11th

PROGRAM: (put together by Cherree)

Saturday Morning- 9th June: Meet at 10am at Philip Dowling's Native Plant Wholesalers in Benara Rd Mt Gambier (on the way to Carpenters Rocks). We will spend quite some time here looking over this most successful nursery, the correa seedling beds and time to do some purchases if needed (what a question!!). Bring morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. Philip just loves correas and he is great to listen to. Afterwards we travel onwards to Carpenters Rocks where we will be able to have a look at a private garden with lots of correas and then look for the local form of *C reflexa var scabridula*. That night we will have a round-table discussion of correas in general as to how wonderful they are.

Sunday 10th June we head to South End to be shown over this fascinating area of lovely coastal vegetation. Lunch with my sister Di Holland who has a house there (BYO of course) and she will take us on a couple of walks. In the evening we will review the Correa Presentation initially put together by the Pyes, and further updated by Phil Hempel to include audio. It may need some further

updating, as more and more of us grow more and more correas. We will also ask people to add to the list of correas already described in Maria's Book- I have made a short list myself and I'm sure there are more. A brief description would be good and if you can take some photos which could be sent to the Pyes or our new Editor.

Monday 11th June. - Head back via Nelson to look at correas there and then via Cape Bridgewater where Philips sister lives and who has a great native garden. If some of you have time, call into Lake Monybiomg (Newsletter No. 14) to have an hour or two there to do the walk to find correas there.

Maps and discussion about a final timetable will be available to those on the Crawl.

The evening venue is the Old Mt Gambier Gaol. Some of us are also staying there.

If you wish to participate and have not advised Barb or David Pye, please do so (dabpye@gmail.com or 03 5428 9369).

