# Association of Societies for Growing Australian Plants Inc. Wallum & Coastal Heathland

Study Group

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Boronia talcifolia

Boronia

MARCH 2002.

Hello to members and other readers across Australia,

It is Good Friday, which dawned grey and rainy with a thunder storm rumbling around as we had a late breakfast. Now, at midday, the sky is clearing and there is a light breeze so I suppose the much-needed rain will now move off. It was a summer with some nasty scorching hot days, not as much of the usual sub-tropical humidity, and certainly not our once-customary wet season. Even here near the coast, there are almost drought conditions, and on our rural properties, we are badly needing a lot of rain to fill dams and flush creeks. Along with the awful dry heat, we had the constant anxiety about bushfires, and in some places, there were serious fires, mostly lit by firebugs, to put it simply. Our local Rural Brigade was kept busy, right through the summer, carrying out hazard reduction burns (a necessary evil) on properties, and putting out a couple of "get-aways". On Bribie Island, extensive areas of coastal heathland/Wallum were destroyed by deliberately lit fires, and on a very windy weekend, similar fires on the Gold Coast wiped out all the vegetation of the Pine Ridge Conservation Park (some of you might remember it from our 1999 A.S.G.A.P. Conference tour), and caused more severe destruction at the nearby Coombabah Conservation Park. In this instance, the culprits were caught - youths of 16 and 19.

Our south-east Queensland fires were nowhere near the magnitude of those which raged through New South Wales over Christmas and New Year, but in most cases, it was the coastal heathland which suffered severe losses, in both flora and fauna. With the loss of vegetation, there are grave concerns for rare birds such as the Glossy Black Cockatoos, with their exclusive diet of Casuarina seeds, and the Ground Parrot which needs certain heathland plant species. I wonder how the recovery of the Royal National Park will go, as this would be the third (?) fire through it since, and including 1994. There must be some changes in vegetation patterns.

When areas in the Blue Mountains were blazing at Christmas, I phoned ex-Sunshine Coast Wallum workers Chris Jonkers and Julie Favell at Lithgow. They were safe, but I was concerned when the action came so close to Woodford, where Lyn & Merle Thompson live. It was a relief when the fire-eys were rewarded for their efforts and saved the town. For several days, I watched the news and thought of these two very hard-working Society members, and worried for them. I'm sure Study Group members join me in thinking of those who suffered loss, and those who went through such very anxious times.

What are the solutions to preventing wildfires from being so destructive, and what should be done with those twisted persons who deliberately light most of the fires? Whenever you read about the factors which affect Wallum and coastal heathland, fire is one of them. It can be both beneficial and ultimately destructive, and a balance

Vanilla Tily

Sowerback junces

Trigger Flower

Stylidium grammifolium



Thelymitm paucifloru



Leptospermum semibuccutum



Fringed Ally

Thysanotus tuberosus

Christmas Bells



Blandfortia grandiflora

is necessary, for the survival of the diversity of heathland species. As we are still learning about our native flora and fauna, and their needs, much of what is being done is still experimental. All we can do is to provide any data available, to add to the records. These horrific fires will provide more statistics, and some day we might know most of the answers. In the meantime, watch for ground orchids which usually produce marvellous flowerings after fires. Have you noticed that Stylidiums and Xanthorrhoeas are usually the first to reappear?



## COMING EVENTS

You might have a chance to observe for yourself, the aftermath of fires, on Bribie Island over the weekend of the 13th & 14th of April. Yes, I know it is only two weeks away, but I do hope some of you will have noted it from the SGAP Qld. Region March Bulletin Activities Diary.

The weekend programme is as follows:

Saturday 13th: Meet 9a.m. at the Bribie Island Community Nursery, First Avenue, (Council Depot) see map in newsletter. Morning tea and social chat followed by inspection of nursery and plants until 10.30, then a discussion on our successes and failures with Wallum cultivation in gardens or other places; propagation efforts, skills, tips; and what we are learning. (See last newsletter No. 14 Oct/Nov 2001 for a picture taken during last year's visit). Break for lunch from 12 till 1p.m. After that, John Ward will show us a Wallum area, before we return to the Nursery for afternoon tea, comfort stop and a final social chat. Day should end around 3.30p.m.

I plan to stay overnight on the Island, and have had the Bongaree Caravan Park's park cabins recommended by my very fussy sister-in-law. Contact me if you are interested in overnight accommodation.

Sunday 14th: 9.30a.m. at the Arts Centre, Sunderland Drive, Banksia Beach - see map in newsletter. Have morning tea, etc., before a walk in the Gardens Wallum and beyond, until approx. 11.30a.m. Time for a look at the Centre's wares before having lunch at one of the Island's smaller parks, maybe Clayton Park on Bellara Street. Day should end about 3p.m. Clayton Park would have been named for the family who lived on Bribie Island when I was there 50 years ago. Their daughter and husband opened and ran Renton's Hardware for many years. The park has a significance for the Redcliffe S.G.A.P. as its members in the late 1970's assisted with Native Tris a plan and the actual planting of Clayton Park,

Patersonia serices

half of which was kept in

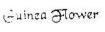
its natural state, which

was Melaleuca wetland.

My next big Wallum "date" will be on the Sunshine Coast on Saturday 22nd June, which will be my annual "working day" with Greening Australia. It will be a Wallum Wildflowers Identification Field Day (I don't have the "official" skills to conduct a workshop) using the Mudjimba Wildflower Gardens - a Wallum rescue and relocation site which has been successful. I'll enclose a registration form with the necessary details for anyone who might be interested in attending. We plan to start the day at 9a.m.

with morning tea/comfort stop at the Mudjimba Community Centre in Cottonwood Street,
see enclosed map. We usually spend most of the morning in the field with
the plants, returning to the Centre for lunch after which there will be a
general discussion with examination of plant specimens, books & photos for
reference, and time permitting, some slides. We discovered a couple of
years ago that using the keys in Stanley & Ross's 3 Volumes of "Flora of
South-east Queensland" too time-consuming and frustrating for the time we
have available, so we use various other methods to learn how to identify
the Wallum plants. This technique might annoy or upset the I.D. purists,
but we have found it satisfactory, and everyone usually has an enjoyable day.

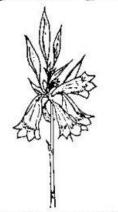
On the next page, there are the dates of a few other activities which will include Wallum plants and displays by our Study Group.



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On Sunday 30th June, the Redcliffe & District branch of S.G.A.P. (Qld. Region) Inc. will be "venturing into the wilds" of the Freshwater National Park

Christmas Bells



at the northern end of Deception Bay. It is not general knowledge that we have this large tract of coastal open forest with a diverse wildflower and native grasses understory. It is quite a lovely place for a winter ramble (those who went a couple of years ago, just forget about that awful cold windy day, there was some shelter among the trees), and we should find some of the little wildflowers in bloom. Meet 9.30a.m. at cnr. Deception Bay Road and Priest Road, see UBD Map 79 Ref. C3. Phone me on 32899272 if you have any queries.

Fairhill Native Plants, THE plant nursery for us on the Sunshine Coast at Yandina, will be holding its annual Festival over the weekend of the 27th & 28th of July. I am usually asked to provide a Wallum display and info stall, and should have no trouble with the Saturday. But on the Sunday I have another Festival back near home, which I do like to attend, so will need someone/s to look after things on the Sunday and pack up the stall Canilla Tily

Blandfordia grandiflora look after things on the Sunday and pack up the st for me. If anyone can do these things for me, please get in touch.

Over the weekend of the 17th & 18th of August, the Noosa Parks Association is having its annual Wildflower Weekend, based at the Environment Centre, Wallace Park, Noosaville. They put on an excellent two days, with lots of displays and named specimens of local wildflowers. On the Saturday there will be a guided walk in the high dunes between Noosa and Peregian Beach, while on the Sunday, Arthur Harrold will probably do his usual guided tour of the Wallum of Noosa's north shore. I've done the latter, and thoroughly enjoyed it, in fact, I can recommend the whole weekend. The Association's resident artist is Janet Hauser ("Fragments of Green"), and is proving a valuable asset to them.

The following weekend continues with the wildflower theme, with the Sowerbaca juncea annual Sunshine Coast Environment Council's Wallum Wildflower Show staged at the Coolum Community Centre (unless this is changed). A new coordinator in 2001, Fiona Hawthorne, will be with us again this year, and there may be some changes, possibly for the better. For now the date is a certainty - the 24th & 25th of August. You can contact me closer to the date for more information. I will certainly be there this year, with my usual Wallum display and information. Study Group members are welcome to come along and help.

That is enough for "Coming Events" in this issue, hope to see you sometime. If any of the southern Queenslanders or northern New South Wales members are attending the Conference this year, I'd love to hear your impressions, especially of the Wallum and coastal heathland areas visited.

#### PAST EVENTS

There have been three since the last newsletter: The 2001 A.S.G.A.P. Conference & Seminar at Canberra, which I mentioned only briefly last time; the November Gold Coast weekend; the January 2002 visit to my Samsonvale garden.

There were times when I didn't know whether I would go to Canberra or not, but in the end I got there, despite Ansett's attempts to be awkward. The inability of some to attend worked in favour of the Wallum Study Group, as I was able to fill the gap in Study Group presentations when Maria Hitchcock (Correa Study Group) didn't come. Ever hopeful that I would be able to give even a short talk, I went prepared with some slides relating to changes which have affected the Sunshine Coast Wallum at Marcoola and Mudjimba. An impromptu talk went over well, the last, after Garden Design, Eremophila, and Dryandra, for the Study Group session. In addition, I was able to provide a colourful display of photos and information leaflets. Sincere thanks must go to Peter & Lyn Reilly who carried my "heavy stuff" to Canberra, and at the Conference, for me. Without them, I couldn't have displayed the photo albums and information folder. So, in 2001, Wallum & Coastal Heathland went to Canberra.

Apart from being able to present our Study Group at Canberra, I'm glad I went, as I had a lovely time. The activities were well planned and there was no feeling of having to rush, at any time. When has there been the need to exit due to the fire alarm going off? And of course, no camera to record all these ASGAPpers standing around waiting for the "all-clear". There were some marvellous inspiring talks, and I loved learning how Canberra was designed, architecturally and horticulturally. that was a really fascinating talk. And who says Australian native plants are dull? All those glorious hybrids as part of the presentation of a nurseryman who is trying to develop the most attractive flowering natives for the nursery industry. Geoff Butler's efforts (and apparent success) to have Canberra's retail nurseries cease selling undesirable plants are desperately needed up here. He spoke on the last day and I only wished we could do the same as he and others have done. The day tours were very pleasant, one day to private gardens and Black Mountain. another to CSIRO and the National Herbarium - I could have spent all day there. I also visited Floriade, while staying a couple of extra days to catch with distant relatives in Canberra. The small representation of Australian native plants at Floriade, against all those brilliant tulip displays, was an insult to our nation's own flora. And I ended my trip with an evening with an 85 year-old aunt, my cousin and her new husband, but missed her brother who was away in Adelaide - returning a few hours after my departure, to my disappointment, not having seen him since 1987.

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#### GOLD COAST WEEKEND - NOVEMBER 2001

Not the most successful event to date - we had the weather against us, and no-one turned up on either day. Saturday dawned with grey skies, not boding well for a good attendance, so only Bonni Reichelt and I met with our guide, Bill O'Donnell, at the Tugun meeting place. So we walked in an area we looked at in 2000, not going too far in case of rain. Development is gradually encroaching on this forested Wallum area - another sad loss of south-east Queensland Wallum when it finally goes. Our reward was an eye-catching display of flowering spikes on Xanthorrhoea fulva. This species develops a cluster of trunkless plants (in wet Wallum areas) and the flower spikes usually stand up straight from the centres of the plants. The odd crooked flower stems make for some interesting photo shots.

After this walk and Bill's departure, we checked with John about arrivals for the afternoon at Reichelt's garden, but there were none, so Bonni & I had lunch and did some shopping at West Burleigh. Returning home, we had our own inspection of the progress of this garden which has been carefully planned and planted, and will be excellent for monitoring the performance of Wallum plants in "captivity". I took more photos for my records, and Bonni and I did some work on ideas for a future publication of the cultivation of Wallum.

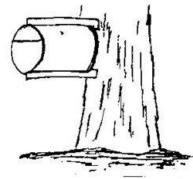
The weather still looked uncertain early on Sunday, but clear blue skies went with us as we walked around Pine Ridge Conservation Park with Peter & Lyn Reilly, the only others to come on Sunday. This Park has had a bad time of it over recent years, with fires, and had just again recovered last November. Again it was flowering spikes of Xanthorrhoea which were spectacular, but these were the trunked species, X. johnsonii. Tall and straight above their grass-like "skirts", these remarkable flower spikes boasted dense cream flowers, causing some to bend and twist. These again provided wonderful specimens for photos (we weren't to know that three months later they would all be destroyed by fire). We also found Boronia safrolifera flowering in the wet

area on the western side of the Park - this too, is all burnt, but should recover. Before we returned to Reilly's for lunch, they took us to one of the places which

will be visited during the State Conference later this year.

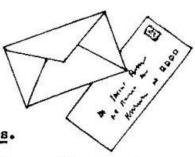
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Post-Christmas forgetfulness probably accounted for the low attendance at my Samsonvale Garden in January this year. The visitors were mainly members of the "Keep Sandgate Beautiful Association" who all enjoyed the more individual attention due to the low numbers - most of them are in the "learner" category. It would probably be better to have a garden visit here in the late winter/early spring when the Wallum plants are putting on a bit of a show. But that is the BUSY time, isn't it?



# FROM MY MAILBOX

which hangs an the trunk of a tall, old Yellow Stringybark or White Mahogany - Eucalyptus acmenoides.



I often neglect this section of the newsletter as I must admit, my filing system over the past few years hasn't been very efficient. So I apologise if anything has been omitted - I plan to improve the "Mailbox" from here on, so please send me a few lines about your Wallum and coastal heathland.

I must also welcome new members John and Pat Webb, from Berwick in the Dandenong foothills, near Melbourne. Pat is relinquishing the job of leading the Australian Plants in Containers Study Group this year, and I am delighted that they decided to spend some time on Wallum & Coastal Heathland. Although I am experimenting with growing collections of Wallum plants in large pots, I didn't join that Study Group, as I already have enough on my plate. Pat wrote me a lovely letter on some equally lovely paper, and included a list of the Indigenous Plants of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Cranbourne, which I visited back in 1995, in connection with the Ballarat A.S.G.A.P. Conference. Pat asks a question - The Tasmanians seemed to think Wallum and Coastal Heathland are different - are they? No, they are not, they are the same type of plant community, with a different name up here in Queensland, and to some extent, in northern New South Wales. The word "Wallum" is believed to be the name given to the Wallum Banksia, B. aemula, by the indigenous people of south-east Qld. As this Banksia occurs in some Wallum habitats, the name was given to those coastal heathlands. She tells of the disappearance of the Mornington Peninsula's coastal flora as development took over, during the 12 years they lived in Balnarring, but there was another small patch they enjoyed, near Hastings. Pat lists wildflower species which could be found from August to October in a protected (by Melaleuca ericifolia) area near some special intertidal mud-flat. And yes, Pat - I have a copy of the book you mentioned - "The Mornington Peninsula - a field guide to flora, fauna & walking tracks by Dunn, Rennick & Grayley". I bought it when at Ballarat in 1995, and remember the late Stephanie Rennick well, as she was quite convinced that our Queensland Wallum plants would invade the Peninsula when I told her of one of my Study Group members being successful in propagating some seeds from up here. That member now lives on the Sunshine Coast, and I don't think any of her plants went wild.

By far my best correspondent is Ida Jackson, Kingscote, Kangaroo Island, S.A., and I don't really do her justice, as she always tells me about places on her Island and the flowers. She commented on my tale about the destruction of Swamp Orchids on our Gold Coast, then tells an area where the locals dump all sorts of rubbish. While new fences will stop that and help with revegetation, they will also keep her out! Ida also gave me information on publications of the Kangaroo Island flora, and I will try to obtain them. Thank you, Ida, and I will one day get to visit the Island.

Two letters, one in December, the other March, from Helen Schubert, who lives at Cooloola Cove near Tin Can Bay, Qld., and belongs to the Cooloola Coastcare. Helen is a very keen Wallum person, and appears to be the one who "does the plants" for the group. In December she told of the destruction of a large area of lovely old gums, with Wallum cleared and burnt within a few days, for <u>future</u> housing development. Prime Real Estate - it was one of their main sources of wildflower collection for displays, such as the Wallum Wildflower Show at Coolum. I was relieved that the Styphelia viridis, etc. are still intact, but this clearing will impact on to nearby Mullen Creek, with erosion. Then just this month, some information on what is going on at the Bay - makes me wish I was there, with all the action. Thanks, Helen.

Margery Stutchbury from Bundaberg, Qld. had been away, and caught up on her membership with a short note, saying that she hopes to get down our way this year - maybe! I always looked forward to some news from Margery, but I think Daisies have grabbed her now. But I'm pleased that she remains a member as the Bundaberg region still has substantial Wallum, with a lot of different species, such as pink Phelabium, etc.

### "From the Mailbox" C't'd:

Each day at last year's A.S.G.A.P. Conference Seminar, there was a raffle, which was capably managed by Cathy Hook and Paul Carmen. In November I received a lovely card, handmade with an insert of dried Chrysocephalum apiculatum. Obviously made by Cathy (Cathy's Cards on the back), it contained two photos of me with the Study Group display at Canberra. Not having my camera with me, I asked Cathy if she would take a photo of the display for me, so now I have a record of it. Cathy wrote that she thought the Study Group displays and contributions were valuable in providing an opportunity to learn and appreciate what others are doing. She knew nothing at all about the Wallum & Coastal Heathland S.G. before my presentation. Well, I suppose this particular plant community would be rare around Canberra, but I did see one species (at the Dix property) which occurs in our wet Wallum on the Sunshine Coast. The plants were much smaller, but there was no mistaking Wurmbea dioica, even from the top of the double-decker coach.

And from some very hard-working Wallum people, one from Mudjimba, Sunshine Coast, the other now living in the Blue Mountains, but previously at Mudjimba. Both of these were very heavily involved with the rescue, relocation and setting-up of the Wallum Garden at Mudjimba, one still spending at least two days per week there. I met Betty Sykes (a marvellous lady in her 70's) back in the mid-90's at the Environment Day Festival at Maroochydore, and she spent many hours following me around as we rescued plants ahead of the earlier stage of the Marcoola development, south of Coolum Beach. A keen learner, she soon converted her garden to mostly natives, with lots of her "little darlings" as she called her Wallum plants. The sign on the gate says "WALLUM", and one year she took first prize in a section of the local garden competition. A member of Coolum District Coastcare, she was one of that group which collected 5 awards in 2000 from the Maroochy Shire Council's Adept-A-Park scheme. In January, to keep our phone bills down, she wrote to me about how the Wildflower Carden was progressing, and about future plans. Betty is a Wallum "treasure", and has taken over the monitoring of the garden since this other person has moved. Julie Favell also became involved with the Mudjimba Garden, as her partner, Chris Jonkers was the Maroochy Council's Greening Australia Extension Officer until they moved south about a year ago. I introduced Chris to the Marcoola Wallum patch in February 1998, and from then he quickly organised local community groups in various projects - weeding, replanting and rescuing threatened areas of Wallum. I've had two letters from Julie since they moved, first to Mt. Victoria then to Lithgow, in the Blue Mountains. She tells me of heath growing very near to the houses, and of all the similar plants she is identifying. She has continued with the environmental work, joining the local community nursery and the Friends of the Botanic Gardens. While I hope Julie & Chris one day return to the Sunshine Coast, I am glad that she is still involved with plant work, and hope we can manage to continue to correspond.

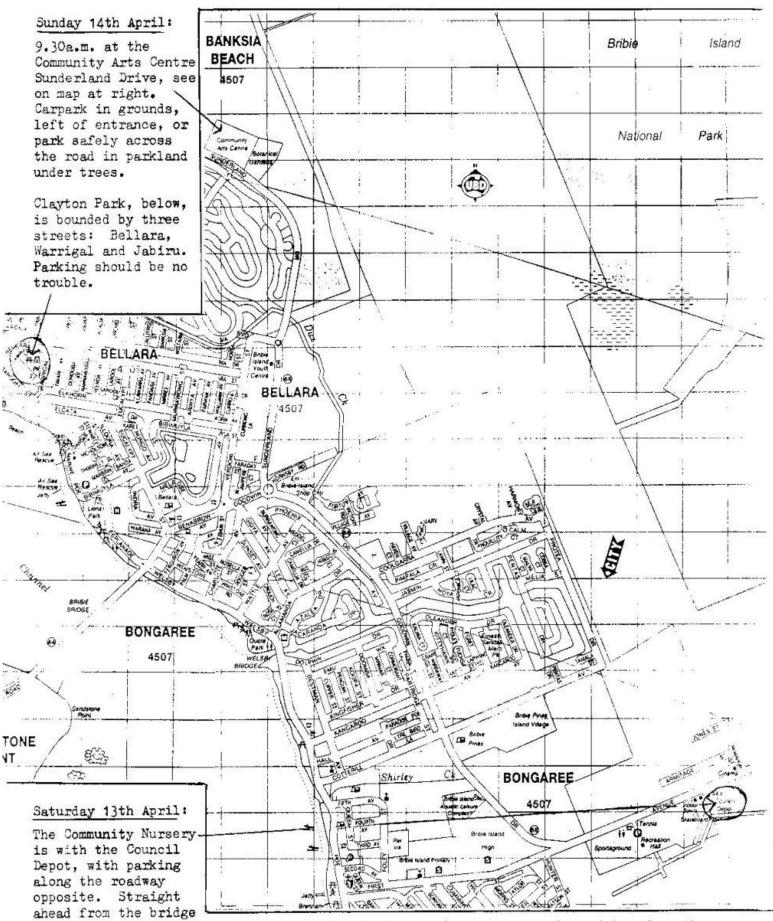
I had another letter, from Hazel Dempster in W.A., with some photos from the Wallum Day Tour of the 1999 A.S.G.A.P. Brisbane Conference - the Beerwah walk - but I have temporarily mislaid it. Hazel wrote about how development is also a threat to the bushland and its treasures in her part of the country. So it seems that our special coastal heath and Wallum areas are all under serious threat of permanent loss all around Australia's coastline. Tasmania also has marvellous heaths on its east coast, but I have read of its destruction too.

Here in south-east Queensland we have lost most of the Wallum from the New South Wales border north to Noosa Heads. The next places to go, unless some sense prevails, will be around Tin Can Bay, and further to the north. Agnes Waters and the Town of 1770. These little seaside

go, unless some sense prevails, will be around Tin Can Bay, and further to the north, Agnes Waters and the Town of 1770. These little seaside settlements are just starting to become known, and development is looming. Poona township, north of Tin Can Bay, had some beautiful Wallum in glorious full bloom last August, but it was all subdivided into housing blocks. Not everyone who purchases one of these blocks will save the wildflowers on them, and what they stand to lose - they probably won't even realise.

Please remember that my mailbox is there, hanging on the old gum tree, and letters are far more welcome than bills and junk mail.

Stylidium graminifolium



into Benabrow then Goodwin Drive, curving left into First Avenue, then right after the sportsground, etc. The Bongaree Caravan Park is bounded by Fifth Avenue and Queen Street, near the water tower and bowling club, across the road from the water.

I won't include "Some Cultivation Notes" segment with this newsletter, as space is running out. Instead, the next issue will focus on "Cultivation", and what we hope to do about our experiences with Wallum and coastal heathland plants. By that time, I might also have a survey form to send to you, for some information. I had quite a few notes about my own efforts with Wallum plants over the past 10 years, and in some cases, since 1988. So, in readiness for the next newsletter, hopefully in June, start making some notes about your Wallum.

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S.G.A.P. isn't the only organisation I belong to, as my interests also include our birds. Since coming to live at Samsonvale 20 years ago, I've increased my knowledge enormously, and now get a lot of enjoyment out of all the feathered visitors to my garden. I belong to the Bird Observers Club of Australia, and their two-monthly magazine has some interesting reading at times. The February 2002 issue contains a story - "Hidden Treasure", about the Grange Heathland Reserve, Clayton South, Vic. It is a 6.6 ha. area of wild bushland of outstanding conservation value, with a rich floral display unfolding from July to December. In the 1860's it was part of a farm, kept apparently as shelter for cattle. Hidden away, it was used by children to play in, and for locals to dump rubbish until, in the 1970's developers began to move into the surrounding area. Luckily some locals persuaded the Council to save it, and a management plan was recommended. It was burnt out in March 1991, but instead of complete destruction, rubbish and weeds were cleared, and subsequent regrowth was phenomenal, with species appearing which hadn't been seen there before. It is now managed by the City of Kingston, with rangers working there at least three days a week. Management has resulted in much improvement, and it is one of the largest and most diverse heathland/swamp scrub areas remaining. The article goes on to describe the vegetation which includes Wedding Bush, orchids, lilies, etc., and the birds which use it. Perhaps one of my two Victorian members, both located in or near Melbourne, know of this Reserve, and could provide more information about the plants for another newsletter.

I'm also a member of the Acacia and the Indigenous Orchids Study Groups, as well as exchanging newsletters with Australian Food Plants, Epacris and Melaleuca & Allied Genera Study Groups. And this Study Group pays a subscription to the Boronia & Allied Genera Study Group, so I have information coming about plants which occur in coastal heathland. Gwen Elliot's newsletters on Epacris include a "Plant Profile" section, focussing each issue on one particular species of Epacris. While many of these species don't grow up here, this profile has a description of the plant, with a colour picture and a line drawing. I wonder how long it would take for me to deal with all the Wallum plants this way. Well, I wouldn't try, but I was thinking that I could sometimes include a colour shot of some heathland area in flower. Just a thought, but possible.

All the drawings of flowers in this newsletter are the work of my older daughter, Jeanette, whose Art education was only of High School level, so she has a real talent and skill, as they were all done from my photographs. Unfortunately, she has now developed some form of arthritis in her hands (at age 38), and even has some difficulty writing, so there will be no more drawings than the 15 she did, unless something can be done. If anyone ever wants to copy these drawings, they must ask for my permission, which may be given, depending on the use intended.

With that, I'll sign off for this issue, hope you enjoyed your cup of coffee or tea, or whatever, and of course, the newsletter.

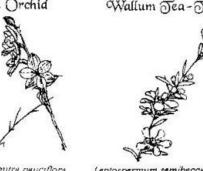
Sarbara H.



Sowerbsea junces Stylidium graminifolium

Trigger Flower









Fringed Tily



Lentospermum semibaccutum

Riandiordia grandiflora