

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

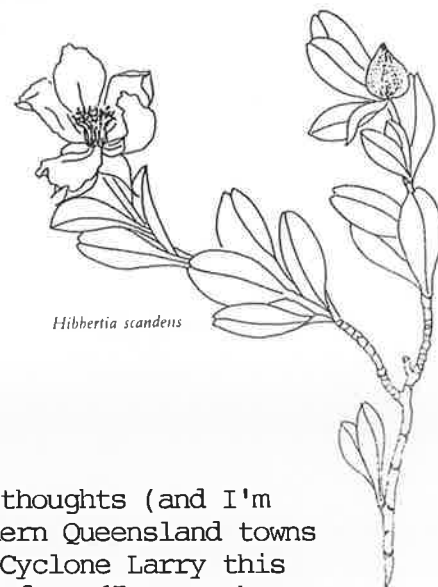
ISSN 1038-7889

Leader: Mrs Barbara Henderson  
270 Farrow Road  
Samsonvale. Q. 4520  
Ph./Fax: 07-3289 9272

Newsletter

20

MARCH 2006



*Hibbertia scandens*

Dear members and other readers,

As I prepare this issue, my thoughts (and I'm sure those of most of us) go out to the people of the northern Queensland towns which are presently reeling from the devastation caused by Cyclone Larry this week. Although I was born out in western Queensland, most of my 67 years have been lived around the Moreton Bay region of south-east Qld., and my summers were always "cyclonic", with lots of wind and rain. During the seven years I spent at Bribie Island between 1948 and 1955, my Postmaster father ran up that red flag often, warning of an approaching cyclone, and we then had all the wind and rain for a few days. There were the times when some damage occurred, boats were washed up on the beach, once the little jetty lost part of its roof, and we even lost telephone contact with the mainland (the peace & quiet of those couple of days with a silent telephone exchange) once. But apart from the terrible flooding of Brisbane in January 1974, I cannot remember any destruction such as that I've seen this week on the T.V. reports. I can remember all the coastal towns from northern Qld. to mid-north New South Wales, whose rivers rose and flooded them - Ayr, Home Hill, Townsville, Bowen, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maryborough and Gympie, Lismore, Kyogle and others - it happened almost every year, but the population seemed to cope. Especially just now, I wonder about fellow Study Group leaders, for the Indigenous Orchid Study Group - Don & Pauline Lawie in Babinda, where 80% of homes have been damaged. I feel also for the banana growers who have lost all their crops, as we were once part of that industry. Although most of them could be back in production in 8 - 12 months, what will happen in the meantime? Will this mean the importation of bananas from the Phillipines, something which the banana growers have been trying to stop? I watch the news and feel helpless, and lucky that it didn't happen here, and wonder what is happening with the weather. Here, in south-eastern Queensland, especially in the low-lying coastal heathlands, so much development has replaced the former plant communities, development by sometimes southern-based companies, for people who have moved north to our lovely seaside places, and they have no knowledge of what was once the normal cyclone and wet season of our summers. Will they someday experience some similar vicious weather and devastation - I hope not.

### Vanilla Lily



*Sowerbaea juncea*

So, enough of the weather, though we can't ignore the extremely dry times we've been having, and the water restrictions imposed on us. With people looking for garden plants which can cope with these conditions, and plant nurseries trying to provide such plants, there are presently some rather dubious offerings around, many of which are potential weeds, given that they will grow anywhere. I can't offer many Wallum plants as water-wise subjects, being that they like those coastal wetland lowlands, and don't really perform very well in very dry places. If, like me, you control your own water supply (dam/bore), you might be able to spare a bit more water for any special plants. But even with such a water supply, I still take care, as dams go dry, and I don't like to exploit the bore water either. It can also become harmful in extreme dry conditions.



*Boronia falcifolia*

Well, now that I am back in action, I guess that the first part of this newsletter must deal with "Coming Events". Queensland Society members have received the March Bulletin with details of activities for the next few months, and our first get-together is only two weeks from this coming weekend - on Saturday 8th of April.

It is our annual Bribie Island Wallum day, based at the Bribie Island Community Nursery, off First Avenue, on the right just past the sportsground. Meeting there between 9 and 9.30a.m., we will start with morning tea & socialising, looking over whatever I will have displayed, and discussing progress, ideas, etc. At about 10.30a.m., John Ward will, as usual, lead us on a Wallum walk to some area of special interest, before we come back to the Nursery for lunch, and some serious discussion, a look at the nursery stock, and then the end of the day. I'll have my mobile phone on if anyone needs to contact me that morning, the number being 0419029688. I rarely use this phone except on excursions, so don't try to contact me on it unless advised. I hope you can be at Bribie on the 8th April.

The next outing is to the Beerwah Scientific Area of the Beerburrum State Forest, ( I think it is now National Park) the date being Sunday 21st May. Under my Permit to Access, I can take 5 cars with 20 persons, through the locked gates, so please contact me on either 32899272 or 54247073, if you are coming. We will meet for a comfort stop and cuppa at the Matthew Flinders Rest Area near Tibrogargan Creek, (and the mountain) on the Glass House Mts. Road, just north of Beerburrum. At this time of year, the Scientific Area is lovely, with Banksia oblongifolia a feature. Walking is easy, and bring lunch as well as morning tea, plus other basic excursion needs.

I would like us to be able to visit the Beerwah Scientific Area again, possibly in July, with a tentative date of Sunday the 9th. There will be the usual B.I.E.P.A. wildflower walk at Bribie Island in August, but at this stage I have no date available. I'm looking at an outing to Wild Horse Mountain, in the Beerburrum region, on Sunday 10th or 24th of September, still to be decided. Please note Saturday 2nd of September for the wildflower walks conducted by the Caloundra-based Sunshine Coast branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld. This is always a pleasant day of wildflowering and socialising, with a display by our Study Group.

As yet, I haven't any dates for other activities around the Sunshine Coast and Tin Can Bay, but will advise of them when I have information. I'm not sure just which shows/displays/walks I'll be involved with this year, as my private life needs me more and more these days.

The montane heath of Mt. Mee State Forest is always worth a visit, and will be kept in mind if I can see a time to fit it in. These days everyone seems to be busy all the time, and organising outings is often sheer frustration, with disappointing attendance numbers. My own life has become so hectic that I can excuse anyone else who finds it hard to fit everything in, but I will try to plan some interesting excursions to those heath and Wallum areas which are still accessible.

The 2005 Bribie Island Wallum Day was again successful, with a satisfactory number participating in what is becoming a regular day's programme of socialising, sharing experiences in trying to propagate & grow Wallum plants, enjoying a walk to see the actual flowers, and learning from one another. Although this year's "Big Day" is not far away, I do hope some of you can fit it into your lives, and join us at Bribie Island Community Nursery on Saturday the 8th of April.

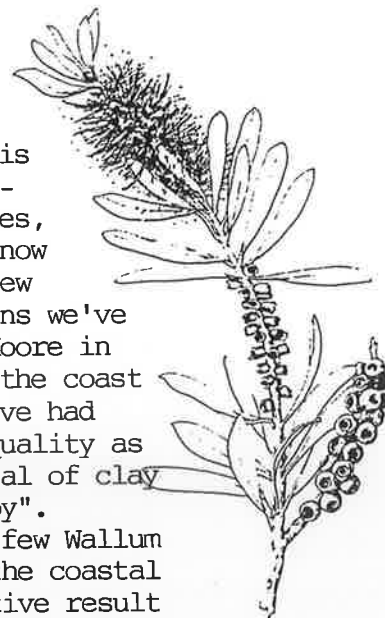
I have received word that plans are being discussed for a Wallum fortnight at the Sunshine Coast, similar to the one we had in August 2005. More news later.

## SOME CULTIVATION NOTES

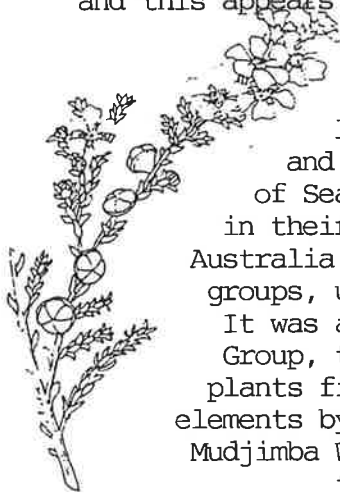
There hasn't been a lot of feed-back from members, but that is probably due to my own slackness with the production of newsletters this past year. I've been trying to live in two homes, and manage gardens at both. Luckily, the Samsonvale one is now well-established, and is coping fairly well, though with a few losses which could be put down to the extremely dry conditions we've been experiencing for a long time now. The new garden, at Moore in the upper part of the Brisbane Valley, is about 80 ks. from the coast as the crow flies, and has different conditions from what I've had previously. The soil has a PH of 7, I'm using bore water (quality as yet untested), and the composition of the soil has a good deal of clay in it - it looks pretty awful, actually, and is rather "lumpy". Callistemons and eremophilas do the best, but I am trying a few Wallum plants, results as yet inconclusive. *Austromyrtus dulcis*, the coastal Midyim Berry, is definitely "not happy", and has had a positive result only following a bit of decent rain last November. Apart from that, it has grown backwards, telling me that it doesn't like the country at all. Of 2 *Hakea actites*, one is growing, a *Dampiera sylvestris* is still alive but showing a bit of yellowing, so has received a little dose of Iron Chelates, as have several other plants. One *Banksia integrifolia* is looking good, as is a *Melaleuca nodosa*, but an *Acacia complanata* is struggling and doesn't look as if it will make the grade. I always thought that *Leptospermum polygalifolium* was a tough species to grow anywhere, but 2 of them have yellowed badly, so on went the Iron Chelates. Dianellas absolutely thrive, all species so far tried powering ahead, with the coastal *D. congesta* among the healthiest plants in the new garden. *Dodonaea triquetra* likes that country, while *Hibbertia scandens* is all right as long as it isn't without a watering for too long, then it tends to droop a bit. So you can see that I am on a fair learning curve, not only with the Wallum plants, but with most of the Australian natives I'm trying to establish. Wallum species will probably never do very well, as it is so far out of their natural territory, but I might try a few in containers. Winter frosts might sort things out a bit too, as yet I haven't experienced much of that as last winter was rather mild, with few frosty mornings.

Back at near-coastal Samsonvale, one experiment failed. When attending the ASGAP Conference at Launceston in January 2004, we visited a nursery specialising in the local species. I came away with 7 plants, five of which are found in our local Wallum - *Aotus ericoides*, *Dillwynia glaberrima*, *Stylidium graminifolium*, two others whose names I can't recall (or find the name tags put away safely), plus Tasmanians *Goodenia elongata* and *Pimelea filiformis*. I grew the *Pimelea* in a container as it had lovely fine trailing stems, and it actually survived until just recently, and I partly blame my "to & fro" lifestyle for its demise. However, it never flowered, and this appears to be the case quite often when we try to grow some of the plants from other States/climatic regions. What do you think?

Of all the experiments and projects attempting to cultivate our Wallum plants, two in particular are close to my heart. Back in late 1997/early 1998, when we knew we were going to lose the vast and beautiful wildflower plain at Marcoola to the development of "Town of Seaside", members of the Study Group were trying rescue plants to grow in their gardens. It was a very small effort, then Maroochy's Greening Australia officer, Chris Jonkers got started in a really big way, and local groups, under his direction, transferred the Marcoola plants to various sites. It was a big experiment, and out of it came the Coolum Beach Coastcare Group, then more & more little localised Bushcare groups. Well, the Wallum plants finally found a home on a beachfront parkland area, sheltered from the elements by the dune-top vegetation, and cared for by volunteers. This is the Mudjimba Wallum Wildflower Rescue Garden (and a few other names from time to time), which had sections added each year until the final work back



*Wallum bottlebrush*  
*Callistemon pachyphyllus*



*Wallum lemon-scented tea-tree*  
*Leptospermum liversidgei*

in 2002, when the company developing the last area of wildflowers at Marcoola and Mudjimba, actually assisted with the transfer of truckloads of the top "sand" and its plants & seedbank. They also helped spread it, and all we had to do then was to wait and see natural regeneration. This happened in the following spring, but a hot summer with insufficient rainfall, saw many of the new plants simply die. The next spring had a glorious show of mauve and yellow, with Sowerbaea juncea and Goodenia stelligera, plus many other species among them. But the sand so generously given by the developer also contained seed of the yellow Dodder, and there is now an ongoing "war" between volunteers and this pest. But in summer, the cover it makes actually protects many of the plants from the intense heat of the open sunny garden! Another constant concern is the regrowing Melaleuca quinquenervia seedlings which, if not controlled to some extent, will make too much shade for the successful growing & flowering of the Wallum plants. The biggest worry, though, is the small volunteer group who tries to look after this fairly large garden. Most of them are in the retiree age group, and while their intentions are strong, the bodies, especially in the heat of summer, are not so resilient. But they are now looking at not so much producing a "pretty-to-look-at" garden, but are using sections for experimental and educational purposes. And there is interest being shown by holidaymakers who stay each year at the nearby Council Caravan Park - they are watching progress. Then at the Redcliffe Botanic Gardens, just north of Brisbane in the small city of Redcliffe, the inspired and dedicated S.G.A.P. member who is responsible for the original basic plan of the Gardens (back in 1988), Don Perrin is now working on an experimental Wallum section there. As yet, there isn't a large variety of Wallum species - the location isn't exactly heathland, and the weather is making things hard - but Don with equally dedicated assistance from the groundsman/gardener and new SGAP/Wallum Study Group member, Scott Phillips, is enthusiastically propagating plants which will fit into the Wallum wildflower category. It will be hard work, due to weather conditions, and again, a shortage of helpers (paid or unpaid), but I know Don will give it a very big try. For anyone who is near enough to visit the Redcliffe Botanic Gardens, it is well worth going, and they are open every day. You could get in touch with Don on 32847420, preferably early evenings, if you need a guide. He sometimes seems a little crazy, but aren't we all with pet projects? The Redcliffe Botanic Gardens have had a chequered history, but they are now quite lovely to walk in, and the water feature is one of the best you'll see. Go and see!

Up the coast at Tin Can Bay, there is still a lot of Wallum to be found, but this beautiful little place is also "going ahead", sadly for some of us. There are plans to build a large marina and carpark near the mouth of Snapper Creek, a project which will impact adversely on nearby holiday units (little separate cabins) which presently look out over the proposed marina site. I spent 4 days there last September, for the annual Seafood Festival, and managed to have a look at a few wildflowers. Along the road banks I found lots of pretty pink Bauera capitata hanging down towards the wet gutters, but the most interesting sight was a fine specimen of Persoonia virgata, one of the Geebung, growing on the top of an old tree stump along the wide road verge of the road into Cooloola Cove. What are the odds that one day some zealous Council workers with "tidy mindsets" will decide that the stump, and the Persoonia must go. Persoonias are not the easiest plants to propagate and cultivate, and the sight of this one on the stump was something to behold.

Cooloola City Farm, Tin Can Bay's community nursery, does a sterling job propagating, growing and using local and other plants for sale and projects. They collect seed from the area (under permit, of course), and through all these efforts, members of Cooloola Coastcare learn about the Wallum wildflowers around them. Last May (2005), a large group from Tin Can Bay attended the Bribie Island Wallum day, sharing their experiences with the rest of us. I was a little puzzled to hear of a "weeping" Boronia falcifolia which one couple had growing in a pot, and which they had grown. In September I saw the plant which was somewhat pendulous in its growth, due, I feel, to being on its own with no support from surrounding plants as in the field. It is now on photographic record. So cultivation attempts often surprise us.



"FROM THE MAILBOX" now sitting on the stump of what was a sturdy Eucalypt before a bushfire back in spring of 2003, and turned the tree into a sparking "chimney", forcing Geoff and his fellow firies to cut it down.

New members in the past year include Heather Brownlie of Caloundra, Sunshine Coast; Simone Disney of Lilyfield in N.S.W.: Scott Phillips from Redcliffe. I may have been a little tardy lately in welcoming new members, if so please forgive me. I fully appreciate all new & old members, and hope you can all bear with me as I try to get back on track after my buying & selling houses, and coping with all the medical issues which have taken up so much of Geoff's and my time over the past couple of years. Time only stretches so far.

Heather came to us through her research into one of our rare Acacias - *A. attenuata*, a Wallum species sparsely distributed around the Sunshine Coast, and at one site on the Gold Coast at Burleigh Knoll.

Scott, as mentioned earlier, is the groundsman/gardener at the Redcliffe Botanic Gardens, and is so keen to know

more about Wallum plants, that he renews my own enthusiasm at times when I start to feel that we are losing so much habitat that there is little left to study. Simone has probably given up on hearing from me again, but I hope she is still with us. I haven't even had a chance to find where Lilyfield is, so know little about where Simone lives, and her interest in coastal heathland.

I received a letter and news clipping from Susie Pickin at Tin Can Bay, with thanks for their Bribie Island day, and other snippets. The high points of her news were the awards received by Helen Schubert - Outstanding Individual Achievement Award through Landcare, shared with another hard worker - and by City Farm as well. Helen's award was for her seed collecting work for the Tin Can Bay (Cooloola) City Farm, and well deserved. I was asked to provide a letter supporting her nomination, a request I was delighted to meet.

As always, there was correspondence from my two regulars - Ida Jackson of Kangaroo Island, South Australia, and Rosemary Opala, an honorary Study Group member from Victoria Point, in Redland Shire just south of Brisbane City.

Ida is always wonderfully busy, and reports on various revegetation projects, as well as walks she does. Kangaroo Island must be a marvellous place, one which I must make the effort very soon to visit. I've been promising myself such a trip for the past few years, but always seem to be too busy. All the little plants Ida mentions in her letters sound so interesting.

Rosemary has moved into a new residence in a local retirement village, and has the hassles of moving house to recover from. I know exactly how she feels, only I am still living between two homes, and often wonder where things are - here, or there? I spoke to her back in November 2005, prior to the launch of the second guide book produced by the Logan River Branch of S.G.A.P. Qld. Region. As we live on opposite sides of Brisbane with a lot of distance between, we rarely meet, and a phone call can be quite a chat.

My complimentary copy of this book "Mangroves to Mountains, Volume 2" came by mail in February, as I was unable to attend the book launch due to a sudden gastric bug which struck a couple of days earlier. To date I haven't studied it thoroughly, but a quick look shows an amazing number of "new" plants from around our region - marvellous. The 2 volumes of "Mangroves" along with Stephanie Haslam's "Noosa's Native Plants" and the Museum's "Wild Plants of the Greater Brisbane Area" now allow us to have more chance of identifying south-east Queensland's native plants and their flowers. These include all those wonderful and beautiful Wallum species, of course.

With time against me just now, I'll leave the Hibbertias until the next issue. Just one little snippet about Hibbertia scandens, though. It is one of the ground covers on the bank as we turn into our backyard at Samsonvale, and is presently in flower. It and a prostrate red Grevillea love cascading down the bank towards the roadway, and were always getting their tips run over by the truck as Geoff drove past each morning. Since we've sold the business, and there is no more truck to "prune" them, they are virtually having a ball. The Hibbertia is lovely, and contrasts with the deep blue Dianella berries on plants in this garden. This species is also climbing up through a Baeckea virgata (or whatever) with its big yellow flowers among the branches. I am having some success in the Moore garden, but it wilts if it gets very dry in the hot weather. Great plant for any garden.

Activities in 2005 were similar to other years, with a couple of changes in the Sunshine Coast happenings. There was no Coolum Wildflower Show, and I would say it will never be held again. The Noosa Parks Association trialled a week's display in the foyer of the Noosa Library. I was fortunate to be included, and provided the usual colourful wildflower pictures from my collection, plus various information handouts. I attended on only 2 days of the week - one day setting up and staying on, another to give a short talk on Wallum. An innovation were talks on a variety of topics, but these were poorly attended, and may not be included this year. Also during this inaugural wildflower week, I conducted a workshop at Coolum, with my display of pictures and information, plus a walk in the Peregrian Environmental Park, and discussions on the Wallum. One evening I joined a group at Emu Swamp, Peregrian Beach, to listen for ground parrots. But it was a squally, showery night, and we had little success. Then on the day I went to the Sunshine Coast Airport to collect flower specimens for the workshop, I had one of my supreme Wallum-experiences. I arrived there around 8.30a.m., parked the car on the track, and wandered into the knee-high vegetation to check out what I could collect. Suddenly there was a rustle among the plants, and this green bird rose up and flew straight and fast just above the wildflowers, rising to go over the high fence nearby, into the adjoining National Park. It was a GROUND PARROT, my very first sighting of one, in all the years of my Wallum wanderings. WOW!! We all hope to see one, some day, somewhere, and I have now been blessed. That wasn't the only magic of that day - there were dozens and dozens of lovely Blue Sun Orchids, Thelymitra pauciflora, to be seen and recorded on camera, in close-up and as part of the general flower scene. Any wonder a person loves the Wallum, and its glorious flowers.

Our 2005 Bribie Island day was very successful, with groups from Tin Can Bay and the Gold Coast "swelling" the crowd. Our walk took us through bush off Hornsby Road, to a cleared area behind the Woolworths Shopping Centre, which we reached by walking along the wide track under power lines. There were lots of flowers to be seen and identified for the beginners, and photographed, and the bulldozed area was covered with scented mauve Sowerbaea juncea, the lovely Vanilla Lilies. Swathes such as this were once common along our coastline, but development has robbed future generations of the pleasure of this wonderful, never-to-be-forgotten sight which we, the older generation, have been fortunate to enjoy many times until now. Now we mourn our losses.

Talking to John Ward, from the Bribie Island Community Nursery, recently, I am pleased to report that he will again be our host at the Nursery, and our walk guide, so please try to come, in spite of the very short notice. From what John has said, we will probably do the same walk as in 2005, as no development has occurred yet.

Beerwah Scientific Area had a couple of visits last year, but numbers were few. It is a marvellous area, with plant communities forever changing and blending, with so many Wallum species to be seen. Be sure to contact me if you plan to come on that outing, as we access only under a permit, by car. And a car is really necessary, as it is too large to appreciate by walking only.

See you at Bribie, 8th April  
or?  
Barbara H.

