



# The Plant Press

Western Australian Regional Herbaria Newsletter

Volume 5 May 1999



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## VALUE-ADDING

### Using your herbarium records to access information

A herbarium collection is not just a static thing like a stamp collection; each herbarium specimen provides a key to vast amounts of information. One specimen in your regional herbarium represents a voucher for a species known to occur in your particular region. Because the regional herbarium specimen is represented in the State Collection by a duplicate, the name is current and you can access information based on all the other specimens of that species in the entire State Collection.

For example, if you have a single collection of the salt tolerant species *Melaleuca thuyoides* you can access FloraBase to find that there are 126 specimens in the State Collection, the CALM Herbarium in Perth. The oldest of these herbarium specimens was collected in 1910. Using FloraBase through the Internet you can access the details of the species name, where and when it was published, a distribution map and a short description of its habit and its habitat preferences and flowering times.

The value-adding you can derive from this information depends on your individual needs.

If you are managing a nature trail you can prepare a guide knowing when a particular species is flowering. This means that you can list what species are flowering at a particular time, you can therefore prepare a guide to the flowers which may be seen in each month of the year.

If you are documenting the salt tolerant species of your area with a view to selecting species for planting, you will learn that the particular species has a range well beyond your own location; it is quite likely that at other locations the particular species is more salt tolerant than in your defined area. Thus by accessing the available information you have value-added on your own sample and that sample has provided a key to information collected over the last 70 years.

Where you are mainly interested in documenting the plants of your local area, you can use the available information to determine the conservation value of a particular reserve or vegetation remnant.

Neville Marchant

Newsletter of the Community Regional Herbarium Volunteer Program

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### Stop Press!

We are delighted to have received the first box of specimens from the Gascoyne Junction Herbarium.

# Plant Protection Society Sundowner

Another date for your diary!

**PPS Sundowner 4:00 pm Friday May 14**

in the Theatrette at AGWEST, South Perth.

## Salvo Vitelli

National Weebuster Week Coordinator,

will give an update on what is happening with Weebuster Week around Australia.

Mr Vitelli is based in Brisbane with the Queensland Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

He has a background in the sugarcane industry and, more recently, weed extension in SE Queensland with DNR.

## Kate Blood

CRC Environmental Weed Education Coordinator,

is based at the Keith Turnbull Research Institute and is the immediate past-President of the Victorian Weed Science Society. Ms Blood will speak on invasive garden plants, in particular the 'Garden Plants Under The Spotlight' (GPUTS) Report.

## Rod Randall

from AGWEST's Weed Science Group

contributed to GPUTS and will also be available to answer questions.

Refreshments will be served.

For catering purposes, please register with Judy or Steve on (08) 9368 3215.



## Rottnest Island Regional Herbarium

Rottnest Island has long been used by schools and other groups to study history, geography, biology, art and other disciplines. The Rottnest Island Guides have also been an institution for quite a while. Elizabeth Rippey, of the Shoalwater Bay Regional Herbarium, is coordinating a group of about 20 Rottnest Island Guides to form a new Regional Herbarium. They aim to document the island's flora and to have the herbarium open to all visitors to Rottnest. A cottage has been allocated to them for this purpose.

On Monday November 2 1998 interested Rottnest Island Guides attended a workshop that was held in a banksia woodland reserve within walking distance of the Western Australian Herbarium. There they were exposed to the delights and dangers of collecting, recording field notes and pressing. Elizabeth wrote to tell us that since the workshops the group had "cajoled large and cheerful bunches of *Carpobrotus* into presses!"

Well done Rottnest Regional Herbarium.



# HORTICULTURAL DATABASE FOR THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN FLORA

**Establishment of a database system to capture horticultural information on WA plants, both natural and cultivated, and for this knowledge to be accessed for public interest and benefit.**

The Wildflower Society, Kings Park and Botanic Garden and the Western Australian Herbarium, sponsored by the Gordon Reid Foundation, have commenced a one-year pilot project to establish a database for the horticultural aspects of native flora, both wild and cultivated. Previous projects have determined the botanical descriptions of taxa which are featured in Florabase. This current project seeks information on the propagation and cultural aspects of targeted species.

The Wildflower Society (WFS) has engaged the services of Antony Konig who will be promoting the project to Wildflower Society members and select Landcare groups. He has a background in horticulture and training and is keen to demonstrate and explain how people can be involved with entering their information on growing plants into the database. Antony is working closely with staff in Kings Park who have developed the Horticultural Database.

Aims of the one-year pilot project for the Horticultural Database, commenced in November 1998, are to:

- ◆ establish a reliable and user friendly data collection and reporting package for interested parties to record horticultural information;
- ◆ develop a training package to teach personnel to use input package;
- ◆ target personnel from the WFS and other sources for horticultural information and train to use data input package;
- ◆ promote the project;
- ◆ collate and analyse information and prepare reports on results, performance and potential of database system relating

to horticultural aspects of wild and cultivated plants, Landcare issues, restoration ecology and promotion of the conservation and promotion of the WA flora;

- ◆ disseminate horticultural information collected during the pilot project.

Information will be from people who have firsthand knowledge of native flora; this is not a desktop study involving a search of the literature.

To achieve the above aims, the focus will be on:

1. ***Banksia* spp.**

Information from KP & BG staff has been initially collected to fine-tune the database software. WFS members and banksia growers are now asked to contribute. This knowledge will be an integral part of a report in November '99 and may provide the basis for a booklet on growing banksias. Assessing the time and resources required for banksias enables extrapolation and estimation for the resources required to compile horticultural information on all WA genera.

2. **WA flora used in Landcare restoration.**

This study would seek to identify plants used in Landcare restoration, detail horticultural information on species, contrast differences between field and garden grown species, identify gaps in knowledge and establish methods of reporting and accessing horticultural information relevant to Landcare restoration. The emphasis would be on WA flora. Two regions, or the most three, will be selected with resource estimation for future work being important. This information will form part of the final report and again may provide the basis for a booklet.

(Continued on page 4)

*(Continued from page 3)***Horticultural Database**

It is intended that WFS members and Landcare groups, with suitable training and support, enter their horticultural information into computers. The format will be simple with question and answers on selected topics with opportunities to write text for additional information. The software only needs basic computers of 486 capacity or higher. Data will then be collated and analysed and recommendations made on how to grow plants, which people can comment on. Up to date progress reports and future events can be viewed on the webpages of the Wildflower Society and Kings Park as well as the "Plant Press".

Contact person:

Antony Konig,

Horticultural Database Consultant  
for the Wildflower Society

C/- Kings Park and Botanic Garden,  
West Perth WA 6005

Ph (W) 9480 3653, Fax (W) 9480 3601,

Email: <antonyk@kpbsg.wa.gov.au>



## Locality Descriptions

It is pleasing to see that most specimens now come in complete with latitude and longitude values, however some are arriving with lat/longs but insufficient locality details or, in a few cases, none at all. We do need both lat/longs and enough locality details for a future collector to have a reasonable chance of finding the population again. So please include distances and directions from a known landmark, e.g. town, road junction, river crossing, hill, etc.

## Visit to York River Conservation Society

On Wednesday April 28th, Chris Hollister, Maureen Hart, Maggie Hankinson, Margaret Lewington and I spent the day with collectors from the York River Conservation Society. Those able to attend were Judy Monks, Alison Clarke, Barbara Salter, Hugh Seeds and Cecily Howell.

The group, which has been active for 10 years, has permanent quarters in the Old Sandalwood Sheds. They are working on a number of projects all designed to increase knowledge about the flora and fauna of the district, so they will be better able to work towards improving the condition of the Avon River and preserving remnant vegetation in the area.

We lunched at Mount Hardey Reserve under the shade of some magnificent salmon gums. This reserve has been surveyed by the group and soon they will be revegetating the reserve with seedlings grown by CALM. We also drove along a Flora Road - nothing in flower at this time of course - and stopped at a winter-wet area. Here we found some Restionaceae and were able to distinguish between male and female plants and discuss collecting techniques for this interesting family.

This visit to York, like the other to Rockingham, was a good opportunity for the country collectors and the city volunteers to meet and exchange ideas and experiences about all aspects of field and herbarium work. We hope to be able to make similar visits next year.

Jan Gathe

# Melaleuca Collections

The large genus *Melaleuca* is currently in the latter stages of revision by Canberra-based taxonomists L.A. Craven and B.J. Lepschi. With at least 250 taxa in WA, it is one of our most important genera. There will be many changes including the recognition of a large number of new species, particularly in what has become known as the '*Melaleuca scabra* group' (ie. those with terminal inflorescences - Section 4 in the old Blackall and Grieve IIIA).

During the years that this revisionary work has been proceeding, it has been the practice at the herbarium, rather than applying old and probably incorrect names to incoming specimens, particularly from the *M. scabra* group, to call the doubtful ones simply '*Melaleuca* sp.'. This has been frustrating for all concerned but with the revision now in its final stages, most of the new names have been assigned, though these changes will probably not be published for a year or so.

In this interim period, Brendan Lepschi has offered to identify specimens coming through the regional herbaria network if we can provide him with duplicates to be lodged at the National Herbarium in Canberra. This has now given us

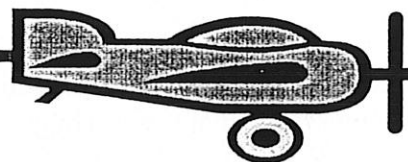
the capacity to provide reliable species names in the very large *Melaleuca scabra* group for the first time in many years.

However, to be able to take advantage of Brendan's offer, we will need to receive at least 2 *Melaleuca* specimens (preferably 3 - the third will give us the option of improving our reference collection) per incoming collection, so that we can forward the duplicate to Canberra. Remember when making *Melaleuca* collections always to include some fruit to go with the flowering material. In many cases a firm identification is not possible without seeing both flowers and fruit.

Of course exercise your discretion when making a relatively large collection of 3 or 4 specimens. In some cases it may be undesirable for reasons of conservation to do so where a species is apparently rare in the area of collection. But most *Melaleuca* species are quite large, floriferous plants and this is not usually a concern.

Mike Hislop

**We've been travelling**

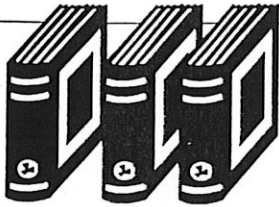


## Visit to Rockingham Environment Centre

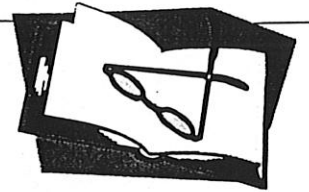
On Saturday 20 February, Gillian Smith, Thelma Palmer, Pat Angel and Jan Gathe went to the Open Day at the Rockingham Environment Centre. Bob and Ann Goodale, Jane Davie and others have worked very hard establishing this facility which overlooks Lake Richmond.

When completed, the Rockingham Environment Centre will be open to the public and will provide information on many aspects of the environment around Rockingham. They plan to involve school and youth groups as well as local conservation groups such as the WA Naturalists' Club and the Friends of Shoalwater Bay Marine Park.

The Regional Herbarium coordinated by Jane Davie will be housed in the library, where it will be available to the public.



## New Books



Biological Resources Study. 1999. Flora of Australia. Volume 1. Introduction, 2nd edn. CSIRO. \$60.00, a 30% discount. Useful information on vegetation and collectors, a family key, glossary, etc. A CD-ROM is also available, for price contact Barbara.

Books listed in Volumes 3 & 4 are still available.

These books can be obtained through the WA Wildflower Society. Orders can be sent to the following address:

WA Wildflower Society  
Attn. Mrs Barbara Backhouse  
Unit 8/38 Ednah Street  
Como WA 6152



## Rare Flora Reports



The last issue of "Plant Press" (Vol. 4 December 1998) contained articles on our rare and priority flora and in particular highlighted the ongoing need to survey and monitor these taxa.

With over 2100 taxa currently listed as Priority or Declared Rare Flora, it is easy to appreciate that this is a huge task. This important work is currently performed by CALM field officers as part of their duties and also by groups of volunteers. Because of the magnitude of this undertaking however, there remains a great deal of fieldwork to be completed before CALM has enough information on which to base future conservation strategies at the species level. Our expanding Regional Herbaria network represents a reservoir of local knowledge and expertise across large areas of SW Australia and could assist in the gathering of such data.

If individual Regional Herbaria would like to participate in this important work by joining the Rare Flora Volunteer Program, they should get in touch with Dr Ken Atkins, Wildlife Conservation Section, CALM Como, ph.9334 0425, or their local CALM office. Alternatively they could assist at a lower level by filling out the copies of the Rare Flora Report forms that will routinely be sent to individual herbaria when collections of conservationally significant taxa are received in Perth. The collector's notes will be attached to the report form and these already contain a good deal of the information required in the form. The additional information considered most important by the Wildlife Conservation Section can be added under the headings that have been highlighted on the form, eg. number of plants, potential threats, etc. Drawing a mud-map to show the exact location of the plant is also very important.

Mike Hislop

## Critically Endangered Taxa Posters

These are now available for 16 taxa. To obtain free copies contact Andrew Brown at the WA Threatened Species & Communities Unit (WATSCU), ph 9405 5166, fax 9306 1066.

## Threatened Species Network Community Grants

**Round two opened: Wednesday 28th April 1999**

**Round two Closing date: Tuesday June 29th 1999**

The Threatened Species Network (TSN) is a community-based program funded from the Endangered Species Program of the Natural Heritage Trust and World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The TSN's mission is to involve the community in the recovery of threatened species and ecological communities.

The TSN Community Grants have been established to support and inspire community work to recover threatened species and ecological communities. The Grants aim to provide seed funding to assist community groups to take on long term responsibility for the conservation and recovery of our unique flora and fauna. With over 40% of nationally threatened species occurring in our state, this represents an exciting opportunity for community members to take up the challenge of saving our threatened species.

Incorporated community-based organisations, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations, are invited to apply for funding. Incorporated regional or catchment management organisations will also be considered where the majority of members are non-government community representatives.

'Hands on' and 'On ground' work will be given high priority. Work undertaken should aim to mitigate major threats to the species or ecological community and encourage the local community to take on responsibility for on-going management within a short period of time.

If you would like further information on this initiative and how you can put together a successful application, please don't hesitate to contact your TSN Coordinator, Sandra McKenzie at the WWF WA Office on Ph: (08) 9387 6444 Fax: (08) 9387 6180 or email: <wwfperth@ozemail.com.au>. The application forms and guidelines can be viewed at the TSN website: <<http://www.nccnsw.org.au/member/tsn>> and are also available from the Regional Herbarium Office at the WA Herbarium.



## Flora Image Database



As a result of our article in the last edition of "The Plant Press" we were delighted to receive slides and prints from several participants in the Regional Herbaria program.

At present we are seeking extra images of the following species (where possible flower, habit, environment and botanical detail such as buds, fruit, etc.)

**Goodenia** all species except *G. drummondii* subsp. *megaphylla* and *G. katabudjar*

**Scaevola** all species except *S. nitida* and *S. striata*

**Stylidium** all species except *S. calcaratatum*, *S. galioides*, *S. hirsutum*, *S. mimeticum* and *S. spathulatum*

While slides and prints lent to us are in the Herbarium we keep them locked up and return them to you as soon as they are scanned. And, of course, the photographer's name always appears on the composite image.

Kath Napier

## Regional Herbaria Locations

Thank you to the Herbaria who responded to the request in the last Plant Press;  
the reply slip is repeated below for the rest!

**Busselton:** Busselton-Dunsborough Environment Centre, Prince Street, Busselton  
(next to Mitre 10) Open 10.00am-4.00pm, Wed, Thu, Fri.

**Denmark:** Denmark Environment Centre, 25 Strickland Street, Denmark  
Open 10.00am-4.00pm Contact: B.G. Hamersley 9848 1611

**Esperance:** CALM Office, 92 Dempster Street, Esperance  
8.15am-4.30pm, Mon-Fri Contact: Coral Turley 9071 3733

**Kalbarri:** CALM HQ, Ajana-Kalbarri Road. Kalbarri Ranger in Charge, Kalbarri National  
Park 9937 1140, Don Bellairs, volunteer, 9937 1692

**Serpentine-Jarrahdale:** Landcare Centre, cnr Paterson & Cockram Streets, Mundijong  
Bush Rehabilitation Officer 9526 0012 for times attended,  
Herbarium Coordinator Geoff Brand 9525 5212

**Warwick:** Home of contact person, viewable by arrangement with Karen Clarke 9382 8482

**West Arthur:** Library, Shire of West Arthur Office, Burrowes Street, Darkan  
9.00am-5.00pm weekdays. Contacts: Val Crowley 9736 1295, Jan Smith 9736 1051

Please let us know where you are!

(if you haven't done so already)



Regional Herbarium Name.....

Address where specimens are kept.....  
.....

Opening times or contact details for people wishing to see the specimens.....  
.....

Regional Herbaria please complete this information and send it to us at:  
Regional Herbaria Program, Western Australian Herbarium, Locked Bag 104,  
BENTLEY DELIVERY CENTRE, WA 6983