

# ANPSA Correa Study Group

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*Correa reflexa* "Granny's Grave"

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**Newsletter No 59 June 2019**

## LEADERS' COMMENTS

Hello everyone.

We wonder how your correas are going. At home we would be able to pick a correa flower over most months of the year, but come the latter part of autumn the correas really become the showpiece of the garden, and this continues until the end of winter. In our case the fact that there would be over 100 plants each of *Correa pulchellas* and *Correa reflexas* to contribute to the garden show would of course be a strong factor.

For us the *pulchellas* would be the most striking of the correas. Most of our 50 variations would be shades of red and orange, but in addition there are those with salmon, pink or white flowers. They range from prostrate plants up to 2.5m width, small compact plants, to those of about 1m in height. Most have their floral show right out there, to impact the eye. Being smaller plants in the garden setting, many are placed so that they present their show readily.

*Reflexas* grow well for us, but compared to the *pulchellas* they do not generally display themselves as strongly. Neils Best (Red Empress) stands out as a *reflexa* form that has large bells well displayed over a lengthy period. I find the leaf variations of the *reflexas* to be highly interesting. There are the drooping spaniel type leaf structure that partially obscures the flowers, the soft foliage as found around Buchan, the thin leafed variations from the South Gippsland area, such as Fat Fred and the more firm foliage as from the Brisbane Ranges. One plant from near Malacoota has unusually dark foliage and a very nice bell, making it a special plant for us. The colour ranges of reds, pinks, greens and whites place these amidst our favourite plants. Our tallest *reflexa*, from the east Gippsland region, is close on 2m in height and produces soft green flowers. It is this sheer diversity that makes this species so special to us.

Recently we planted out some fresh *Correa lawrencianas*. One was the var. *genoensis*, a plant that we had been on the lookout for years. Happily, all are doing well. These are used as screening plants, one being between an orange tree and the back fence.

Generally speaking, our correas are in good shape as they continue into the winter season. Earlier, in the extended hot dry period, we lost a number of plants. This is a nuisance, as we do not normally replant a fresh correa in the position where one recently died. Some fresh summer and autumn plantings also failed while others have done well, so we just have to grin and bear it and keep propagating and planting more.

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### Financial Report

Bank Balance 4/6/2019	\$1,111.11
Correa Crawl Expenses	\$85
Bank Balance 24/6/2019	\$1026.11





## Correa Crawl – South West Victoria 8-10<sup>th</sup> June 2019—Neil Duncan

Our leader for the weekend was Cherree Densley who being a local had inside knowledge of where to find the correas. Our weekend began in the middle of Warrnambool where Kevin Sparrow met us at Swan Reserve a native garden he and other locals created. Here we saw correas in flower as well as Banksias and Hakeas and Grevilleas with many other natives making a show in spring. Probably one of the most well known correas comes from Warrnambool – Grannies Grave a low growing correa with green flowers which unfortunately seems to have disappeared from its natural habitat.



Grannie's Grave Correa growing in Swan Reserve

It was a relatively small group of 9 for the weekend including Bob and Dot O'Neill, Ray and Prue Weeks, David and Linda Handscombe, Sue Bendall and Neil Duncan but for the Saturday we were joined by Kevin and his wife Joyce and three other Warrnambool members.





## Correa Crawl—(cont)

After leaving the gardens we headed off through Port Fairy and on to Codrington not to see the wind farm but to the Codrington Nursery. Here we stocked up on an array of native plants including some correas all at very good prices. We then headed up to Mt Clay and walked along some tracks looking for correas. They are no doubt in there as Cherree knew of different colour forms she was hoping to see. As it was we only found 1 in flower and a few plants.



Whether it was the wild weather earlier in the week or the dry autumn there were next to no flowers to see on the correas. Cherree then took us to see her home in the bush block before heading down to Sawpit camping and picnic ground for lunch. Being a holiday it was a popular spot for camping, and after lunch we enjoyed the sunshine as we walked to the whalers lookout only a 20 minute walk away giving wonderful views across the bay to Portland but alas no whales were spotted. From here the Warrnambool members headed home while the rest of us set off for Portland.

After a brief toilet stop in Portland we drove out to the Gannet Rookery to look for more correas but it is located near the Rifle Range which was operational that day so the track to the rookery was closed.

At this point the group split up with some going off to look at the views and others back to their accommodation for a rest before meeting at the Gordon Hotel for dinner.



The few who took the drive out to Point Nelson before dinner were rewarded by finding a few *Correa albas*.



Walking along tracks looking for correas.



Stopping to look for correas



Correas found near the Gannett Rookery



## Correa Crawl—(cont)

Sunday morning and we were ready for Mt Richmond our first stop. The walk to the Ocean Lookout was interesting with various fungi on show but the correas were proving elusive. Evidence of koalas was obvious with lots of scats and some well eaten trees and sure enough there was a koala hiding up in the tree. At the lookout there was a great view across to Cape Bridgewater and a number of wind turbines. Cherree told us of her success in getting a wind turbine moved as it was going to be placed in the middle of a patch of correas with some unusual colour forms. Returning to the cars and morning tea we were going to return down the hill to Telegraph Road but we took a wrong turn and ended up on South Boundary Track. As we checked maps Ray and David went exploring and there were a few correa reflexas as well as epacris— pink, white and red forms of *Epacris impressa*. A 20 minute search found correa reflexas flowering but all of the red form.

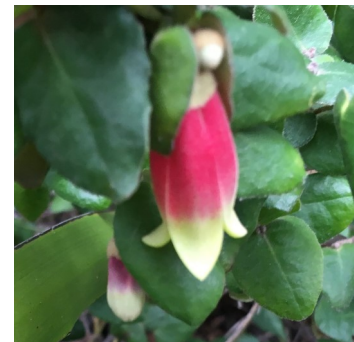


*Epacris impressa*

Our next stop was a bit harder to find but it was along the road to Nelson and then down through the pine forest to Long Swamp. The drive in was challenging for 2 wheel drive cars but worth it once we got there as the sand dunes had plenty of interesting forms of the *Correa reflexa* including prostrate forms.



*Correa reflexa*



We found many interesting forms of *Correa reflexa* on the sand dunes at Log Swamp around the Nobles Rocks carpark.





## Correa Crawl—(cont)

From here it was a 10 minute drive to Nelson where we had time to explore ourselves before dinner at the Nelson hotel and a swapping of cuttings we had brought from home.



Wherever we went we could always see correas as we looked at the large red and yellow correa reflexas and other native flowers on Linda's hat.

It rained during Sunday night but luckily next morning was sunny as we boarded the Endeavour boat for a cruise up the Glenelg river. It was lovely to see the banks covered in native bush and many water birds in the water or on the banks.



The Devonshire tea was very well received too as we enjoyed the peaceful river trip. Too soon we were back on dry land and it was time to go our separate ways after an enjoyable weekend of correa crawling.

Thanks to Cherree for organizing the trip and the O'Neills for facilitating the weekend.



## Article by Maria Hitchcock

I had the pleasure of visiting the Handcombes a couple of years ago and was given a number of cuttings to take back for the National Collection. David and Linda Handscombe have since moved from their Pomonal property but while they were there they had quite a number of seedling Correas pop up in their garden. All are being trialled in my garden here in Armidale NSW.

*C. alba* x 'Coconut Splice'

*C. alba* x 'Linda's Peach'

*C. glabra* 'Bron'

*C. pulchella* x 'Millie'

*C. alba* x 'Strawberry Shortcake'

*C. backhouseana* x 'Marians's Baby'

*C. glabra* 'Little Sweetie'

*C. reflexa* x 'Numma's Baby'



Coconut Splice



Linda's Peach



Strawberry Shortcake



Marian's Baby



Bron



Little Sweetie

## Article by Maria Hitchcock (Cont)



Millie



Numma's Baby

### More Information on these correas provided by Linda herself

C. alba x 'Coconut Spice' -hardy, 1.0m x 1.5m, open round shrub

C. alba x 'Strawberry Shortcake' -hardy, 0.5m x 1.5m, low and very attractive layered shrub

C. alba x 'Linda's Peach' - hardy, 0.5m x 1.5m, low and very attractive layered shrub

C. backhouseana x 'Marian's Baby' I've been calling it '**Baby Marian**' - hardy, 0.8m x 1.5m, open sprawling shrub, very pretty

C. glabra 'Bron' - hardy, 1.0m x 2.0m, very wide and not too high and always glossy foliage

C. glabra 'Little Sweetie' - hardy, 1.0m x 1.5m, round shrub

C. pulchella x 'Millie' 'Milly' - not so hardy, needs a bit of water, tends to blow out if you don't trim it but so pretty, low and wide

C. reflexa x 'Numma's Baby' [named because previously thought it was a nummularifolia seedling] - Is a fabulous seedling from Joan Pitaro and Joan renamed it 'Georgie Girl' because she lives in George St, - hardy, 0.5m x 1.5m, low and round and very satisfying!

### More from Maria

#### The National Collection

I have updated the website to make it easier to identify varieties. Images are now posted according to their classification. There are four pages of Gallery arranged alphabetically according to species, e.g., C. alba, C. backhouseana etc. You need to hover the cursor over the image to get a name and information.





## Moving!!! by Linda & Dave Handscombe



Pomonal, nestled on the eastern side of the Grampians ranges, was a great place to live. If you went on the Grampians Correa Crawl several years ago, you probably visited the Handscombe garden under the eye of Mt William in Long Gully Rd.

We didn't have a lot of shade so our Correas mostly grew in full sun [with the exception of *C. bauerlenii*, *C. lawrenceana* and *C. 'Gwen'*] and they thrived in the sandy soil and gravel mulch. The sand and gravel was very conducive to the emergence of seedlings and some of our best so far have been 'Bron', 'Milly', 'Linda's Peach', 'Baby Marian' and 'Maid Marian', 'Thea', 'Zany Zane' and 'Mt Lubra's Child' [a 2006 bushfire seedling].

We lost the garden in 2006 in the Mt Lubra bushfire and we lost about a third of the new Correas in the wet humid summer of 2011. Over the last few years, the Correas began to struggle and whilst we used not to water much over summer, we started having to supplementary water garden beds to keep them alive. Our frosts began to increase in severity and although most of the Correas coped well, poor *C. 'Gwen'* regularly dropped her leaves. She always survived but was much happier under the protection of other plants.



The Correas brought in an abundance of Honeyeaters, Eastern Spine Bills and pesky Rosellas.

With David's retirement approaching we bought a 6 acre block of land in Illowa, one kilometre from the rim of the Tower Hill crater near Koroit. The soil is yummy, chocolate brown, volcanic loam over a layer of volcanic black scoria.

We've spent the last 4 years planting boundary trees and large shrubs and have since built a new house and moved in on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April this year. There is no shade and we are beginning to form up new garden beds to house our many native plants including many Correas.

As we ran a small nursery in Pomonal, we were always propagating and had a wide range of native plants in our garden and in the nursery and as we prepared to move, we started amassing 2 of every species we had, to plant in the new garden. Hence the name of the new garden... 'The Ark Garden'.





## Moving!!! (cont)

When moving time came, there seemed to be millions of plants. David and our brother in law Ross, hired a 6.5 tonne truck THREE times to get the carnivorous plants, the orchids, the ferns, the rainforest plants, the native shrubs and trees and of course the Correa collection down to Illowa.



Having left behind 4 igloos and 2 substantial orchid houses, David and Ross hastily constructed one ingenious igloo to house the whole lot. They used 12 droppers over which they arched lengths of 2 inch polypipe. They covered this with shade cloth. They wired a polypipe watering system above the length of the igloo from arch to arch. We've only lost a couple of plants that have missed out on water and the only problem so far has been that the plant we want to reach is always out of reach.

We have grand plans for all our plants but I'm particularly excited about finally getting the Correas into the ground. I have a sister nearby and we've given her and Ross lots of surplus Correas and they're all doing really well so fingers crossed for our Correas in this exciting new garden adventure, 'The Ark Garden'.



## Growing Correas at Tarrawingee - Michael & Carole O'Sullivan

After an initial very dry start to spring with only 30mm of rain, the season changed in November when 52mm of rain fell. It changed abruptly on December 13 when 134mm of rain fell in just a few hours, leaving an inundated garden, and flash flooding in the district. 99% of the rainfall was useless. The ground was so dry and hard and it simply ran off.

Soon after this event, the summer heat set in drying the surrounding countryside. In the following eleven weeks the total rainfall amounted to just 40mm. During that time the temperature was between thirty five and forty degrees. Having a very reliable bore enabled the garden to survive. The garden is heavily mulched with straw to a depth of between 50mm and 100mm. The straw breaks down over a two year period. It helps to keep the ground and the root zones of the plants cool over the summer period and to retain soil moisture.

Over the summer period, and into early autumn this year, very few plants were lost. However, in the period from mid-March until mid-April quite a few plants were lost than over the summer period. It has been found in the past that *Correa Puchella* plants do not like wet summers, especially if there is heavy rain in February. They just up and die in a few days.

The majority of plants which died this summer were planted in the early spring. Perhaps the very dry time experienced then did not allow the plants to develop a deep root system. Plants planted out in the autumn fared much better. Since the end of April until the present time the rainfall has been very good with 125mm up until the middle of June. The plants have all responded to this. The autumn flowering *Correas* and those which flower for much of the year have really responded with new growth and a proliferation of flowers.



The *Correa Reflexa* and *Correa Glabra* plants have all put on new growth. The *Correa Pulchella* Plants have been amazing. Most of the older plants have been a mass of flowers, with some of the younger plants beginning to flower more. The flowers have been enjoyed by the resident New Holland Honeyeaters and the winter visiting Eastern Spinebills. This is the first year for a while that the birds have knocked many of the flowers from the plants in their search for nectar.

Plants which are flowering well at present include *Correa Di's Favourite*, *Coralie*, *Pink Mist*, the *Warby Range Form* of *C. Glabra*, *C. Boat Harbour*, *Federation Belle*, *Coffin Bay*, *Ivory Bells*, *Pink Ice*, several forms of small *Puchella* types with differing shapes and shades of pink flowers, some orange flowering plants from different parts of South Australia.



Bob's Garden

One of the better flowering plants in the garden is a plant named *Bob's Garden*, which flowers for much of the year.

It appears to be a cross between *Correa Decumbens* and a type of *Correa Reflexa*. It came from cutting material received on the *Correa Weekend* in 2015.



*Correa Glabra* Warby Range Form





## My Correa Story - Bob O'Neill



I began my gardening days as a young child in my father's garden. We had moved onto a treed block at Warburton East where my first job was to help dig, chop then jack out stumps to help make room for a garden. The next stage was to help maintain the mini orchard and vegetable patch. Gardening was for a full belly and a clean yard, with only a small emphasis on some exotic ornamentals. I still have the old axe that I used in those early days, 70 plus years ago.



The deeper interest in natives only commenced in adult married life after we had our own home. On one occasion I was invited to a meeting that featured correas. Afterwards I mentioned to Dot that I would like to grow some. "We already have 3 in the garden", I was informed – I simply had no idea. First up I had the simplistic idea that I needed only one plant to represent each of the species, how wrong I was. It has been a learning curve and a growing obsession ever since.

A few factors made this a practical one. Firstly, correas grew locally in the wild, with many other variations growing within a day's drive. I soon learnt the differences in differing localities, to me something like a jigsaw puzzle, and I had to piece those pieces together. Secondly, the plants grew for me. They coped with frost, full sun and full shade. The birds and the bees were attracted to them, while the larger plants could be used as screening plants. Also very relevant was the fact that as most correas are smaller sized plants, more of them could be fitted into any sized garden.



Soon I learnt how to propagate them, which meant that I could visit friends and exchange plants, though I fear I did earn a reputation in those days as the man with the knapsack. One plant could become numerous, for our use or for other people, not to mention the cost factor in setting up a garden. Over the years more correas have come our way via friends than via nurseries, though there is no way that any nursery could possibly be expected to stock the full range held by various correa enthusiasts.

Our first native garden was developed on an 8 acre property at Wandin North. We had the space and conditions to develop the whole property into a native garden that in its mix would have contained about 450 correa plants – those were the days. We had the space and we used it.

Just over 8 years ago we downsized to our current one acre, so space has now dictated limits and we must make choices as to what goes in and what cannot. Currently we have about 130 correa variations and aim to maintain at least 2 of each. Choices must be made, one must be organized, for if one variation is lost then we have a problem or an impossibility to replace it.

I enjoy the correa game. One visits many places, the plants are fascinating and the friends that one makes along the way are fabulous. Over the years I have experienced much satisfaction, I have received a lot, and now is the time to share and give freely. That is now my philosophy.



## Looking at Correas from the Perspective of a Nurseryman Comments by Brian Jack

I should say that I live on a quarter acre block with the front garden comprised only of native plants. Of those plants 21 are Correas. I would like to have more varieties but there is nowhere to put them and the back garden is comprised of two greenhouses and one propagating house as well as a garden for fruit trees and vegetables.

The range of correas I have, including those in the front garden, are quite interesting and some are obviously commercially viable for nurseries and home gardeners. Because I am so restricted by the lack of space I cannot afford the luxury of putting any more correas in as a nursery man and as an avid Correa enthusiast.

These comments include some made by visitors to my property. These visitors are keen native plant gardeners or want to be native plant gardeners. They come to me to see what variety of plants I have that are suitable for them. Their comments are based on the plants in the garden and they then ask me for advice. The majority of people visiting want a plant that is hardy, colourful, not too tall and easy to maintain. Some of the correas fall into that category. The most popular correas I have in the garden are Candy Pink, Catie Beck and Coastal Pink.

Other correas in the garden include Jezebel, Pink Carpet, Autumn blaze, Fat Fred, a variety that has been named as Skye Belle, Canes Hybrid, Lemon Twist and a few others. I have propagated all these varieties as well as several others. Buyers react to the following - Lemon Twist, Angel Tear, Autumn Blaze Skye Belle, Jezebel, Canes Hybrid, a glabra tall form, puchellas and decumbens prostrate form.

A strong point in favour of correas is that they are extremely hardy and require very little attention. Pruning after flowering helps to keep them in a bushy habit. A turnoff for some correas is that they are sparse plants and although the flowers are beautiful the general appearance of the plant is not appealing. A good example of this is correa Fat Fred. I have one in my garden that I have had to nurse for two years and although it is still sparse almost all the flowers are born on the tips of lateral growth and are very conspicuous. There is a definite possibility that this variety could be used as a special pot plant with smaller plants surrounding it thereby eliminating the general appearance of sparseness and legginess. Another variety that could be used to take advantage of its tendency to fall over or lay flat is Autumn Blaze. Hopefully the current plant breeders of correas will see the logic in my comments.

I feel confident that some of these varieties once reaching maturity would become popular. A handicap for introducing new varieties is that the lack of colour pictorial labels. Most people seem to need a label which shows the flowers and cultural advice. You are probably aware that label printers need to get a single order of 1500 or 3000 labels for them to be viable. So the problem is the nurseryman introducing a variety does not want to buy 1500 or 3000 labels when there is uncertainty about the possibility of that variety being popular. Another problem that I see which has been referred to by some of the enthusiasts is that there are new forms or new varieties by natural cross pollination. This adds to the problem of labelling for identification and cultural notes.

Enthusiasts are welcome to visit my small nursery and view the Correas.



Fat Fred



Autumn Blaze

## Propagating Correas by Cuttings - Neil Duncan

Correas are relatively easy to grow from cuttings although some forms are easier to grow than others.

The process I follow is to firstly remove any flowers or flower buds as the plant will put energy into producing seed rather than roots which is what we want. If the tip is soft that is also removed as it will readily wilt and stress the cutting. The cutting is taken just below the leaf and the bottom third to half of the leaves are removed.

The cutting is about 50 to 100mm long and then I dip it in rooting hormone. I use the purple Clonex gel which has 3g/l of IBA hormone, which is for semi hardwood cuttings which is what I aim to use. The cutting mix I use is 2 parts coarse sand, 2 parts perlite and 1 part coco peat. This is a relatively heavy mix which can damage roots when transplanting but as my cuttings only get watered once a day it holds moisture well and there are usually enough other roots on the plant to enable it to grow away no problems.

Once watered in the cuttings go in my hot box at 20oC. Cuttings take on average 6-8 weeks but some particularly if taken when flowering can take much longer but still give a good percentage of success.

If you don't have a hot bed cuttings can still be successful but take longer. The containers I use depend on how many cuttings I have. If just a few then a tube is OK, if about 10 cuttings then a larger tube but if about 20 cuttings they go in a shallow pot preferably with very good drainage.

Once they have formed roots they just get potted up into a tube using a native potting mix.



**Coco Peat Perlite and Coarse Sand form my cutting mix**



## Propagating Correas by Cuttings—Neil Duncan - (Cont)



Small and large tubes and pot for cuttings and Clonex hormone



Cutting hot box