



Friends of Wireless Hill Newsletter Autumn 2019

The Friends meet on the 2nd Monday of each month at the Capital Radio Room, Wireless Hill Park at 7.00pm.

Weeding/planting activities are at 8.30am on the 2nd and 4th Sunday.

BANKSIA MENZIESII

This is the quietest time of year for flowers in the park, with most of the summer flowering over and the winter flowers not yet emerged. It is however a wonderful time to admire the firewood banksia, *Banksia menziesii*. Its common name is due to its quick burning character. It is also regenerated by fire like most *Banksia* species.

Flowering occurs from May to July and provides invaluable food to insects and birds during the coldest part of the year.

The following information is adapted from the Wikipedia entry.

Overall the inflorescences, or flower spikes, take around eight months to development from the first microscopic changes in late spring. The flower spikes can be up to 7–8 cm (2.8–3.1 in) wide and 4–12 cm (1.6–4.7 in) high. They are composed of numerous individual flowers; one field study south of Perth recorded an average of 1043 per flower spike, while another on plants in cultivation in South Australia recorded an average of 720.

B. menziesii has more flower colour variants than any other *Banksia* species, with flower spikes occurring in a wide range of pinks, as well as chocolate, bronze, yellow and white, and greenish variants. They are particularly striking closeup but can look indistinct from a distance. They are most attractive in late bud, the styles contrasting well to the body of the inflorescence, the whole looking like a red- or pink-and white vertical candy-striped bloom. The inflorescences are generally a deeper red after colder weather and

further into the winter. Anthocyanin pigments are responsible for the red and pink shades in the flowers.



Beautiful *Banksia menziesii*



A native bee enjoying the feast
photos by Margaret Matthews

SAVE THE DATE

The Wildflower Walk at Wireless Hill this year will be held on Sunday 8th September.

The Picture Palaces of Perth: an exhibition at the Wireless Hill Museum runs until 17 November.

Opening hours:

Wednesday and Friday: 10.00am to 2.00pm

Sunday: 12.00pm to 4.00pm

Contact Museum staff on 9364 0158

Talks and other events are being held in conjunction with the exhibition, see the City of Melville web site.

Please note that it is illegal to pick native wild flowers in Western Australia



National Wildflower Conference in Albany, Western Australia, Sept-Oct 2019

The Wildflower Society of Western Australia is hosting the 2019 Blooming Biodiversity Conference in Albany, Western Australia from 29 September to 4 October. Blooming Biodiversity will celebrate the unique flora that is the global biodiversity hotspot of the South West region of Western Australia.

Keynote speaker, botanist Greg Keighery, said that “the Conference theme is **Know, Grow, Conserve and Enjoy** our Western Australian wildflowers and the program of speakers and excursions has been designed around this”.

The five-day Conference will feature expert speakers on flora in science, history and art. Among them are author and botanist Alex George, ecologist Malcolm French, former Curator of Palaeontology at the WA Museum Ken McNamara, historian Malcolm Traill and horticulturalist Amanda Shade.

Highlights of the Conference will be the A J Swaby public address by Professor Stephen Hopper and in-conference excursions to iconic locations, including Stirling Range and Porongurup National Parks and Greens Pool and the Banksia Farm in Mt Barker, to experience South Western Australian flora in its natural setting.

Pre-and post-Conference Tours will explore the wider South West and Great Southern regions. Beginning or ending in Albany, these optional tours include Western Australia’s Wheatbelt and Inland Southern Heaths, the Kwongan heathlands and Darling Scarp forest, the Southern Mallee shrublands and heaths of the southern coast, and the southwest Jarrah, Karri, Tingle, Wandoo and Tuart forests.

Albany is renowned for its spectacular coastline, pristine beaches and national parks, as well as its rich history. “Huge Karri trees grow up to 90 metres in the wettest areas of the South West, while the Albany Pitcher Plant hides away in dense vegetation on the banks of streams and swamps” said Greg Keighery.

Full information and registration details can be found on the Conference website at:

www.bloomingdiversity.com.au

We look forward to seeing you on Wireless Hill
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