



PLANT
TRUST

GENUS

Summer 2025

Quarterly publication of
Plant Trust (GPCAA Inc.)
Incorporation Registration No. A0017946R
ABN 17 035 716 44



PLANT TRUST

Protecting diversity in garden plants

Plant Trust aims to protect diversity in our garden plants by supporting identification and registration of collections of plants held in Australian private gardens, by garden societies and clubs, at botanic gardens, commercial nurseries, parks, and historic estates, and wherever enthusiasts have developed and maintain a significant representation of a plant genus or grouping.

Plant Trust encourages education about garden plants and their conservation through the establishment of registered reference conservation collections on its National Plant Collections Register™.

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Editor: Damian Nieuwesteeg

Registered by Australia Post
Publication Number VBH91 4376
ISSN 1320-5013
SRN A0017946R

Opinions expressed by authors are not necessarily those of Plant Trust.

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A word from our President

Stephen Ryan

As the year draws to a close, I am pleased to report that our organisation continues to move forward. Damian has brought fresh energy to the office and has done an outstanding job compiling *Genus*, our quarterly newsletter for members.



We are grateful for his efforts and hope he will continue, but remember – he needs your contributions, so please don't be shy! We also welcome a new treasurer, Deborah Crellin, who we are all looking forward to working with. Meanwhile, our working groups are making great progress with their respective priorities.

Several [events](#) are being planned for the new year; and we look forward to sharing details once finalised, but first, our end of year celebration next month (*details on page 21*). I look forward to seeing many of you there – it is always a relaxed and enjoyable occasion.

I encourage everyone to consider starting a [collection](#), which remains our primary purpose. If you're unable to do so, perhaps you know someone among your friends or acquaintances who is quietly cultivating an interesting collection of plants. Soon, I hope to share a list of plant genera suitable for collections – even those with limited space can participate and compete with the grandest estates!

Wishing you all a wonderful Christmas and a happy, productive gardening New Year.

Yours,
Stephen Ryan
President

Collection holder profile

Geoff Bogle Arboretum

Raymur Springs, Hoddles Creek, Victoria

by Don Teese

Around forty years ago, Geoff Bogle was asked to grow some Christmas trees for a wholesale nursery. He managed to find a lady in Melbourne who had raised a large number of seedling conifers for traditional European Christmas trees. These included European Silver Fir (*Abies alba*) and Norway spruce (*Picea abies*). So, he bought them and grew pots for the Christmas trade.



Bogle Arboretum in Raymur Springs, Hoddles Creek, Victoria, Australia

From this beginning an interest in conifers arose and gradually other plants as well. These were planted out on his one-hundred-acre (40 ha) property in Raymur Springs, Hoddles Creek, Victoria and so a collection began which has now developed into a world class and significant arboretum. From those early days the collection has grown to a staggering four thousand taxa including 1,750 different conifers including nearly all pine species, 240 oaks – with some of the related *Lithocarpus* and *Castanopsis*, numerous magnolias – with many from the *Manglietia* and *Michelia* sections, and numerous other genera including some Australian rainforest plants.

It has been maintained by Geoff alone which in itself is a remarkable achievement. At first, he bought plants from a number of nurseries but later many nurseries and collectors donated their plants to him to grow the collection and preserve varieties. Two of the main sources of plant varieties were [Yamina Rare Plants](#) nursery of Monbulk, who had gathered a large range of plants together but had trouble finding space for them all, and Bill Funk of [Merewether](#)

Arboretum near Dunkeld in western Victoria, who supplied many of the oaks and numerous other families of trees.



Above: Neoshirakia japonica courtesy of Nick Boekel

Geoff's collection has provided a resource and safe haven for many plants that would otherwise have disappeared. From some of the more mature trees, seeds have been supplied to nurseries and collectors, in return plants not in the collection would be sent back. Any plants which are declining in health are usually propagated by grafting, seed, or cuttings to replace them. Geoff never had a great knowledge of plant names, but his observational skills were superior, and nearly all of the plants were known to him in detail. He knew whether they had flowered, fruited, suckered or split in the wind (he hated that).

Geoff left school at age 14 and worked in the family orchard business at Doncaster, a suburb east of Melbourne, where they had been

operating since the late 1800s. Grafting and growing trees was an easy fit for him, having worked for pocket money from an even younger age. This knowledge became very useful later when he started grafting conifers, oaks and other plants and raising seed for the arboretum. Geoff understood grafting compatibility easily and he began to develop some new theories such as, that white oaks from Mexico might be more compatible on their confreres than European species.

He and his parents moved to the Hoddles Creek property, 70km east of Melbourne, in 1964. He and his father cleared the rundown farm of blackberries and rabbits and began fattening cattle rather than orcharding. The property sits at 300m ASL at the top and drops 70m to the lowest point. It generally faces north and has two main soils – a red, well-drained volcanic soil, and a shallower badly-drained blacker soil. Hence some genera are put in the wetter areas (*Taxodium*, *Salix*, etc.) and some on drier slopes (*Cupressus*, *Pinus*, etc.).

Many plants have no trouble growing there as the rainfall is good (+/- 900mm annually) and temperatures are never very low with a minimum of circa -2°C. There are a number of itinerant springs and a large spring-fed dam plus a creek at the bottom boundary. Summer days can be very hot, yet many plants are growing in full sun even though books state they will not (*Illicium spp.*, *Daphniphyllum spp.*, etc.). *Abies* grow very well despite the heat in summer, presumably there is readily available moisture and good drainage near the surface.

A patch of remnant messmates (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) is left in one area and a few other species such as manna gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) are scattered around. The occasional koala is seen, wombats are common, echidnas and over one hundred Eastern grey kangaroos are present doing a good mowing job and not damaging the plants. Unfortunately, introduced Sambar deer are doing significant damage to the plants here and to local orchards, private gardens and

natural forest reserves, with government departments and politicians until recently quite uninterested and inactive in getting rid of them.

Each plant is assigned a number which is painted onto a rectangular metal plate attached to or beside each tree. These numbers match a list of the plants kept on file. We have begun creating GPS readings for each plant's location. Each new plant is surrounded by four pine poles in a 1.5m square with horizontal slats to about 1.6m for protection. Once the plants are large enough these protections are removed. Watering only occurs during the first summer.



Above: Acers at Bogle Arboretum

Some weed spraying is done to eliminate blackberries and other serious weeds which may germinate. Also, seedlings or suckers of some plants are sprayed. Seedlings of *Acer pentaphyllum* come up commonly and are sprayed – I can hear the groans, but Geoff was a

farmer and had no sentiment for things in the wrong place. Suckers are sprayed but a close watch is kept on the parent tree to see if it is adversely affected. I think Geoff found this amusing – if you sucker you take the consequences! Some plants tolerate this for some years before suffering at which time spraying stops, if they are still alive!



Above: Aextoxicon punctatum

Collections at Bogle Arboretum

Oaks and relatives

Many of the oaks originated from Australia's biggest collection held by Bill Funk at his property Merewether arboretum. Some were supplied as seedlings and others were grafted from his trees by either Geoff or Peter Teese. Acorn grown trees are notorious for hybridizing, and this has occurred regularly with this collection, so I am trying to identify which are correct and those that are dubious.



Above: *Quercus rubra* 'Aurea'

We have a number of Mexican species such as *Q. sapotifolia* which has remarkable, deeply-fissured bark. It has set a few acorns and what appear to be "true-to-type" seedlings. *Q. candicans* has large leathery, shiny leaves with a white reverse – it grew speedily to circa 15m before snapping off 3m above the ground. It never set acorns presumably because it had never settled in to the steady growth of a mature tree.

Q. rysophylla has grown very large in height (14.5m) and width. It sets acorns regularly, but each one has been a hybrid. A few cuttings have struck successfully. *Q. pentaphylla* is a lovely, well-clothed evergreen with bronze-red new leaves. Some acorns have germinated.



Above: *Quercus aliena* 'Lutea'

In spring and again in autumn, *Q. aliena* 'Lutea' (pictured above) shines like a beacon of butter-yellow to gold. It is very difficult to

graft and can be short-lived but worth the effort. It reached Australia from Japan about a century ago. I [wrote an article for the International Oak Society](#) on this selection if you want more details. Most seedlings are green, but a few have turned out yellow.

Lithocarpus and *Castanopsis* are also present among the collection. Although they set acorns, the consequent germination has been modest for some unknown reason.

Conifers

This is by far the largest part of the collection and includes numerous cultivars and many species. Most genera are represented ranging from Gondwanan species to tropical trees from Asia and the Northern Hemisphere cold climate plants. *Abies* grow very well, but so do *Agathis* and *Araucaria*, *Sundacarpus*, *Podocarpus*, *Cathaya*, *Keteleeria*, *Dacrycarpus* and *Taiwania*.

Magnolias

Magnolias include species from most sections including the old genera; *Manglietia*, *Michelia*, *Talauma*, and numerous cultivars. *Manglietia* and *Michelia* grow well, regularly setting seed. Even *Magnolia champaca* does well, though it yellows a bit over winter. *M. x alba* struggles and needs a more sheltered position.

Maples

Maples (*Acers*) are represented by species such as *A. fabri*, *A. pentaphyllum*, *A. diabolicum*, *A. calcaratum*, *A. mandschuricum*, *A. skutchii*, plus a good assortment of cultivars (*pictum* 'Usugomo', *cappadocicum* 'Aureum', *buergerianum* 'Mino Yatsabusa', etc). An extraordinary collection of dissectum maples all about 2m high by 3m wide, totals about 75 taxa.

Australian plants

Many genera have been planted including rainforest trees from New South Wales and Queensland: *Brachychiton*, *Alloxylon*, *Cupaniopsis*, *Castanospermum*, *Elaeocarpus* and many more.



Above: Elaeocarpus chinense

Shanghai Botanic Gardens seed (SBG)

For many years, Yamina Rare Plants received seed from SBG's Index Seminum until import restrictions became too difficult and expensive. Plants from this source make a regular appearance at Hoddles Creek. These included some wonderful maples species, *Polyspora*, *Pyrenaria jonquieriana*, *Magnoliaceae* (*Manglietia*, *Michelia* and *Magnolia* spp. from other sections), *Styracaceae* (*Perkinsiodendron*, *Melliodendron*, *Alniphyllum*), and many others. Sometimes the resulting seedlings were incorrect. As trees mature, we are correcting the names as best we can.

Sadly, Geoff passed in 2024, aged 86.

We now have the task of creating an ongoing construct that will ensure the survival of this diverse and highly significant collection. It is proposed to form a friends' group and have working bees. This should be successful, going by the enthusiasm shown by visitors we have invited to the arboretum.

*Words and pictures by Don Teese (except where credited otherwise).
Instagram – [teesedon](#)*

~ . ~

Plant Trust will be visiting the Geoff Bogle Arboretum on
Sunday 19 April 2026. Please save the date.

Event recap

AGM and Plant Auction

by *Damian Nieuwesteeg*

Plant Trust's 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) took place on Thursday 11 September at Domain House, Dallas Brookes Drive in South Yarra.

As in previous years, the evening commenced with a warm and welcoming cheese and wine reception, offering guests the opportunity to reconnect, enjoy Meg Bentley's exquisite botanical art on display, and preview the impressive selection of rare and unusual plants destined for auction.

After swiftly attending to the AGM's formalities, including the appointment of [office bearers](#) for the 2025-26 financial year, our President, Stephen Ryan, led us into the highlight of the evening – our ever-popular plant auction.

With over 30 attendees, this was one of our most enjoyable and successful gatherings yet, raising more than \$3,000 in support of Plant Trust's ongoing activities. We are both thrilled and deeply grateful for this outstanding result.



Above: Wendy Forest and Stephen Ryan

Below: Some of the wonderful plants kindly donated



Above: Pieris japonica 'Temple Bells'

The **Committee of Management** extends its thanks to the generous donors whose contributions made this key fundraising event a record-breaking success – your support is greatly appreciated.

We acknowledge and thank the following donors –

[Gentiana Nursery](#), Olinda

[Kuranga Native Nursery](#), Mount Evelyn

[Lambley Nursery & Gardens](#), Ascot

[Post Office Farm Nursery](#), Ashbourne

[Poyntons Nursery](#), Essendon

[Treasured Perennials Nursery](#), West Gippsland

[Yamina Rare Plants](#), Monbulk

John Binnion

Meg Bentley

Peter Haeusler (Peter's Clivias), Monbulk

And of course, Stephen Ryan's [Dicksonia Rare Plants](#) of Mount Macedon.

We encourage our members to continue supporting these independent nurseries that so generously support Plant Trust.

Our sincere thanks also go to all who attended and participated in the auction. We hope you enjoyed the evening and are delighted with your new acquisitions.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge the [Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne](#) for their support in hosting us at Domain House.

Sincerely,

The Committee of Management

Words and pictures by Damian Nieuwesteeg.

Genus profile

Aucuba

'Dust it off and grow it again'

by Stephen Ryan

Aucuba as a Genus is often held in contempt by people that consider themselves as tasteful gardeners! The common variegated form commonly known rather romantically as 'Japanese Stardust Laurel' has far from romantic connotations with those that have seen it used in municipal plantings. It is often seen in dry dusty dark corners thriving on tissues and cigarette butts or even worse used to disguise public lavatories! Obviously, it is too common, hardy and vulgar with its spotted hectic foliage.



Above: Aucuba japonica

This common and despised plant does in fact grow well in these difficult conditions and will also make a good neglectable pot plant both inside and out. I for one enjoy its hectic foliage and think it looks like dappled sun light has found its way into a dark corner. So, if you treat it well, feed it occasionally and keep the leaves clean of dust I think it is a jolly good work horse in the garden. By the way, it is usually sold as *Aucuba japonica* 'Variegata' and an even spottier form is sometimes met with under the name of *A.j.* 'Crotonifolia'.

Possibly the scariest variegated clone is one called *A.j.* 'Picturata' which has the entire leaf centre bright yellow with a green edge, still with yellow spots, talk about bold (or vulgar depending on your outlook!).

Far more subtle is *A. j.* 'Sulphurea Marginata' that has leaves broadly edged with yellow that tends to fade after the spring flush. By mid-summer you have to look closely to see it is variegated at all if it is in heavy shade. Funnily it stays more colourful if exposed to some sun which I do not usually recommend for the Genus.

If you still cannot come at variegation there are several green leaved selections that still make lively foliage plants in shade and one I imported years ago is *A. j.* 'Longifolia' (pictured below left) which has, as the name suggests, long narrow leaves.



Left: *Aucuba japonica* 'Longifolia' | Right: *Aucuba japonica* 'Rozannie'

A newish and desirable clone is *A. j.* 'Rozannie' (pictured above right) which is a dwarf compact selection with very glossy leaves and masses of long-lasting red berries. This is the only self-pollinating clone and if you want fruit on all of the above selections which are female you will need a boy *Aucuba japonica* which even though it doesn't berry is a lively bright green shrub to 3metres that will still earn its garden space, and all the girls will be happy and so will you.

The whole Genus consists of 10 species all of Asian origin and the only other one I have met in Australia apart from japonica is *Aucuba*

chlorascens which I first obtained as *A. chinensis*. This is a seriously stunning foliage plant with huge dark green glossy and heavily veined leaves that adds a tropical effect to the garden but can grow to 4metres (or more) tall. So far, I have not been able to ascertain if the clone we have is a boy or girl and if a girl will japonica pollinate it, time will tell!



Above: Aucuba chlorascens

So, there we have it, a small but useful Genus of shade-loving plants with several species still to find and some other stunning cultivars not in Australia.

So, who is up for holding the national collection of this most useful and garden worthy group of plants and perhaps prepared to import more to adorn our southern Hemisphere gardens? I would throw a few bucks into the kitty to get some more for sure.

Words and pictures by Stephen Ryan.

Committee of Management

Member profile

Gillian Taylor

A few years ago, as I contemplated retiring from a forty-year career in medicine; most of it as a GP, I was looking for volunteer activities that would enrich the 'next stage' of my life.

I have always been interested in the natural sciences and gardens, especially Botanic Gardens, so I joined the Helping Hands volunteer group at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and also became a volunteer at Melbourne Zoo.

Whilst weeding, pruning and mulching as a Helping Hand, I heard fellow members Janet Moritz and Virginia Heywood talking about a mysterious organisation called Plant Trust. Before I knew it, not only was I member, but I was on the committee and helping coordinate the organisation's social activities.

The onset of Covid and its widespread disruption to community groups unfortunately led to the end of the Helping Hands. However, Plant Trust has persevered and continues its important work.

I am deeply committed to Plant Trust's mission to promote and preserve the diversity of garden plants across Australia. Equally, I have found great enjoyment in connecting with the wide variety of people who share a passion for plants and gardening.



*Above: Committee Member,
Gillian Taylor*

Words by Gillian Taylor.

Recipe

Spicy Apple Cake

by Wendy Forrest

By request –

As featured at Plant Trust's Autumn 2025 tour of Kyneton gardens – Wendy Forrest's Spicy Apple Cake recipe.



Ingredients

2 small apples (or 1 large)
1 cup sugar
1 egg (beaten)
4 ounces butter (melted)
1 and ½ cups flour
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
2 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp nutmeg
½ tsp allspice
½ cup raisins
½ cup walnuts (chopped)

Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C and grease tin.
2. Peel and dice apples. Stir through sugar and leave to stand while preparing remaining ingredients.
3. Add melted butter and beaten egg. Fold until just mixed.
4. Sift in flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, raisins and walnuts.
5. Transfer to greased cake tin.
6. Bake at 180°C for 50-60 minutes.
7. Cool on cake rack before serving.

Upcoming events

Plant Trust & Friends

December

Sunday 7 – Plant Trust's [End of Year Celebration](#) in the Yarra Valley.

*Join us for a tour of three wonderful gardens in Victoria's Yarra Valley to mark the end of year. We will start the day in Monbulk with a visit to the magnificent garden of **Peter and Georgina Haeusler**; clivia specialists, before moving over to Olinda with a visit to **Craig Wilson's** superb garden and nursery, [Gentiana](#), and then settle in for lunch at the home of **Virginia Heywood**, Heywood House, in Seville.*

As numbers are limited, bookings are essential by RSVP to contact@planttrust.org.au. \$20 for members, \$30 for non-members.

Thursday 11 – Australian Garden History Society, Victorian Branch: [Special walk & talk at Flagstaff Gardens](#), West Melbourne

***Flagstaff Gardens** are the oldest public gardens in Melbourne with a unique history. The elevated site was used as Melbourne's first burial grounds in the 1830s, and then Flagstaff Hill became a signal station from 1840-5, followed by use as a meteorological observatory. In 1862 it was established as a public garden in the gardenesque style designed by **Clement Hodgkinson**, and in the 1890s, **John Guilfoyle** introduced numerous significant trees and pathways that are extant today. Flagstaff Gardens are of aesthetic, archaeological, historical, scientific and social significance to the State of Victoria so please join the AGHS for a walk to hear this fascinating history.*

Bookings via [TryBooking](#).

Thank you to our contributors

We hope you enjoyed the read

Do you have a story to share?

We are now inviting contributions to the Autumn 2026 edition of *Genus*.

Perhaps you have visited a garden that you would like to write about, or have acquired a new addition to your collection? Maybe you are planning an event that you would like us to promote to our readership?

If you have a story that you would like us to share, please email us at contact@planttrust.org.au and we will be in touch.

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