



Eucryphia

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Robertson Environment Protection Society – to promote the protection and enhancement of the Robertson environment.
PO Box 3045, Robertson NSW 2577 www.reps.org.au

PUBLIC MEETING

FRIDAY 8th April 7.30 pm

**Robertson Community Centre,
Caalong Street**

Professor John Black AM, FTSE, FAIAST

**MORE meat, milk and wool
LESS methane**

**ESSENTIAL NEWS for
BEEF, DAIRY and SHEEP PRODUCERS!
ESSENTIAL NEWS for
THOSE CONCERNED ABOUT THE
ENVIROMENT!**

1. Do you love the environment and really don't like methane messing it up?
2. Do you love your cattle and sheep, wish they didn't produce so much methane **and** wish that they grew faster?



Professor John Black

Professor Black, a Research Management Consultant, will talk about the exciting outcomes – and that's just so far – of the National Livestock Methane Program. John is Technical Coordinator of this far-reaching program funded by MLA (Meat and Livestock Australia).

The program's aim is to reduce methane emissions while increasing the productivity of Australia's livestock. It is proven that methane, animal productivity and environmental sustainability are **very** closely linked.

Scientists have identified a range of treatments – including supplements, forages and genetics – which producers can use to significantly lower methane emissions and increase the productivity of their enterprises.

To whet your appetite, see John explain how on:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nPMdtmQMud8>

(runs for a bit over 6 minutes)

John will reveal a lot more in his talk on 8th April and certainly in answer to your questions.

ALL WELCOME

Join us for supper and a chat after the talk.

A gold coin donation would be appreciated.

“NATURE’S CULINARY MASTERPIECE”

Report of REPS talk on 12 February 2016



Ted Smith making his presentation

For our first public meeting of the year a sizable and interested audience gathered to hear a talk by REPS member and local resident, Ted Smith of Yelverton Truffles. President Peter Glass introduced Ted and his wife Barbara as the growers of the biggest truffle ever found in Australia - in fact in the Southern Hemisphere. At just under 1.2 kg, it almost equaled the largest ever found in the world, and it was unearthed on their property right here in Robertson!



Before the well-attended meeting commenced

Ted introduced his talk by explaining that he was unable to show us any real truffles or to demonstrate their special aroma, since the variety that they grow (the black Périgord truffle) is harvested in winter. He did assure us, however, of the intriguing fragrance, flavour and rarity of what he termed “nature’s culinary masterpiece”, which accounted for the very high prices people were willing to pay for these ancient forest fungi.

Ted gave a brief historical overview which included some fascinating facts:

- The ancient Greeks, Romans and Egyptians all ate truffles.
- The Roman physician Galen saw therapeutic as well as culinary properties in truffles. He did warn, however, that they should be eaten with caution because of their aphrodisiac properties.



Peter Glass with Eucryphia in bloom

- Many people in the Middle Ages thought that truffles were formed during thunderstorms by lightning strikes.
- The mediaeval Catholic Church frowned on truffles and their use because the clergy didn’t understand them, but felt they must be suspect because they were found underground.
- Truffles were the subject of various European folk tales.
- At the beginning of the nineteenth century a French cleric named Fr. Joseph Talon was the first person to recognise the symbiotic relationship between acorns and truffles. As a result he successfully started growing truffles, which up to that time had only been collected from the wild.
- Italian white truffles (*tartufi*) are the most expensive because they are still harvested from the wild – nobody has successfully grown them to date. They are harvested mainly in secret and at night, because of keen interest by poachers, and the Mafia.
- Australia is now the 4th largest producer of truffles in the world.

We then heard how Ted and Barbara came to be growing truffles in Robertson. After 28 years of conducting their own business related to the aerospace industry, they started looking for a suitable rural retirement activity for their Robertson property. They researched and rejected many options as unattractive, unsuitable for the

climate, or simply uneconomic. They became more and more fascinated with the idea of growing truffles as they discovered more facts about them and the industry. They realised that Robertson was one of the few locations in Australia with suitable conditions for growing truffles: deep friable soil, good rainfall and lots of frost. (Other areas are in Tasmania and some parts of Western Australia.) Unlike Europe, however, where truffles grow naturally in limestone soils, they had to adjust the pH of their acid soil by adding 50 tonnes/hectare of crushed limestone.



Lyn Stephenson and Ted Smith

Having prepared their soil, they then bought and planted 300 oak tree seedlings from Tasmania that had been inoculated with French truffle spores, which grow on oak roots. They planted two varieties: the deciduous *Quercus robur* and the evergreen *Quercus ilex*. Plantings need to be in full sun, and located 20-30 metres from any eucalypts. They learned that it can take between four years and never from planting the host trees to harvesting truffles, but were greeted with success in 2011 when they found their first lone truffle, under one tree. Production is now at 25% and still increasing.



Peter Glass and Ted Smith

Unlike other fungi such as mushrooms, truffles grow underground – at a depth of up to 30 cm. In Europe pigs are traditionally used to find them, but they have to be restrained to prevent them eating their precious finds. Australian growers find it more practical to use dogs, which don't eat the truffles. Many trainers prefer crossbreeds, which they say have a keener sense of smell than pure bred dogs. Ted uses blue cattle dogs.

Truffle hunts have become popular in Europe in recent years, and Ted and Barbara have also been overtaken by this trend. The Yelverton truffle hunts are now very popular, and are supported by Tourism NSW and the Southern Highlands Information Centre. Their hunts are offered only in winter, lasting about one and a half hours, and include a range of special treats made by Barbara, plus delicious truffle ice cream made by Ted. Gift vouchers for truffle hunts are also available. There is a strict safety policy, including biosecurity measures such as the requirement to wear shoe covers, to protect the truffle spores from possible contamination.

Ted and Barbara ended the presentation with some practical advice about using truffles in the kitchen. To give the full flavour, about five grams per person is sufficient. Eggs can be infused with truffle flavour while still in the shell. However, truffle flavour in cooking oils does not last, so what is sold as 'truffle infused oil' is usually artificially synthesised. Truffles should last about 3 weeks under refrigeration.

Several members of the audience were delighted to accept the small bags of inoculated acorns offered by Ted, to try growing them on their own properties. Following many questions and answers, Lyn Stephenson made a presentation of flowers and thanked Ted and Barbara on behalf of the audience, accompanied by general acclamation.

Report by Judith Mee

REVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN RAINFOREST PLANT IDENTIFICATION LITERATURE

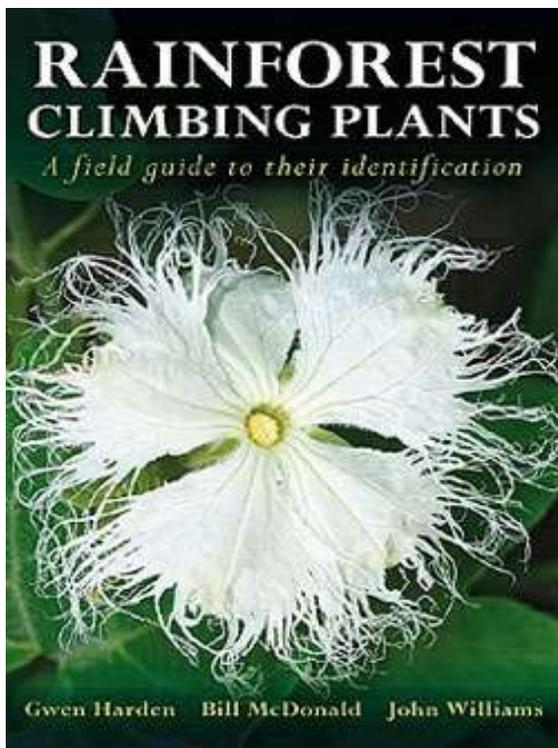
Many of us who are keen to identify the rainforest plants are familiar with the books published by the Botany Department of the University of New England:

* *Rainforest Climbing Plants: a field guide to the rainforest climbing plants on New South Wales using vegetative characters* by J.B. Williams and G.J. Harden (1980), known as the "Red Book",

and* *Trees and Shrubs in Rainforests of New South Wales and Southern Queensland* (1984) by J.B. Williams, G.J. Harden and W.J.F. McDonald.

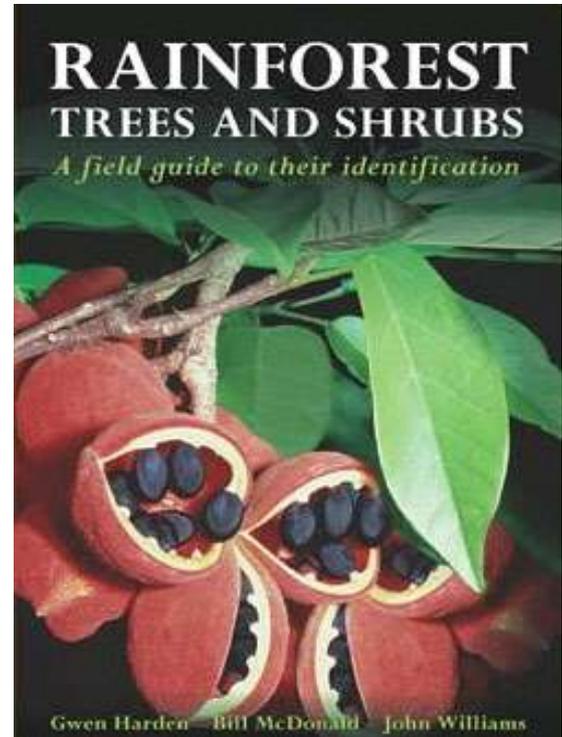
In 2007 the former was updated as *Rainforest Climbing Plants: a field guide to their identification in Victoria, New South Wales and sub-tropical Queensland using vegetative characters* known by many as “the Green Book”.

This was a major update of the 1980 edition and its later reprintings with additions. It has now been expanded to cover mainland Eastern Australia from Victoria to Rockhampton. Descriptions and illustrations are provided for 265 climbing plant species, somewhat more than double that in the original edition. The new edition includes major rainforest types as well as vine thickets and the drier inland extensions of rainforests.



Rainforest Climbing Plants is an excellent identification guide based upon the distinctive features of the leaves, stems and branchlets. Leaf characters have the advantage that they are available for study during any season (except for a small number of deciduous species) and in most rainforest species are sufficiently distinctive to permit identification and subsequent recognition of the species. As well as the obvious points of leaf size, shape and arrangement, there are several finer characteristics such as the presence of oil dots (oil glands), hairs, scales, scaly buds, stipules, latex, etc. which must be checked. Information about these features is provided in several sections of the book.

In 2006 an enlarged and revised edition of the 1984 book on trees and shrubs was released: *Rainforest Trees and Shrubs: a field guide to their identification*, which also covers rainforests from Rockhampton to NSW and Victoria. It includes descriptions of 850 species (an increase of 309 from the earlier ‘Red Book’), each with leaf and fruit drawings.



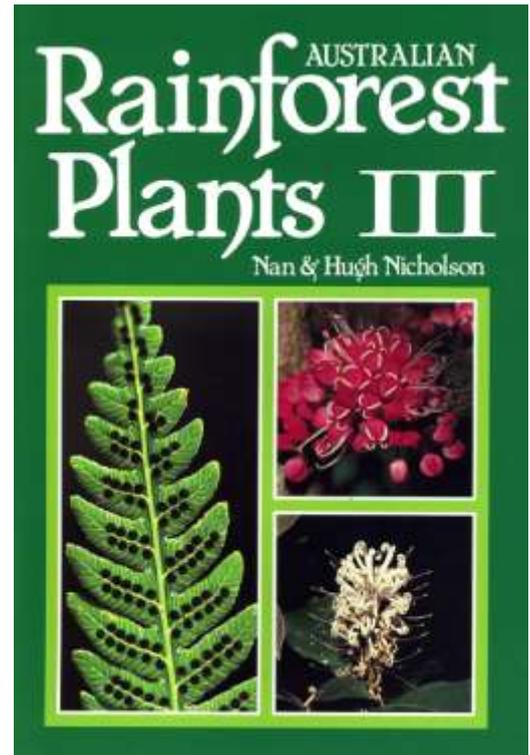
Gwen Harden has edited, authored or co-authored numerous identification guides that have enabled the identification of plants within New South Wales (as in the 4-volume *Flora of New South Wales*) and in rainforest from Rockhampton (Queensland), south through New South Wales to southern Victoria. In 2006 Gwen decided to publish the latest field guides herself (through Gwen Harden Publishing) so that the books and now the USB could be readily distributed at a reasonable price.

The late **John Williams** was for many years a lecturer at the UNE and a highly respected authority on the rainforest flora of NSW.

Bill McDonald was an ecologist at the Queensland Herbarium (Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts) in Brisbane from 1977 until his retirement in 2012. He has worked extensively in the rainforests of south-eastern Queensland and in recent years, the Eungella and Whitsunday region rainforests in central Queensland, and Mt Lewis in the Wet Tropics. He is continuing his research interests in an honorary capacity at Queensland Herbarium and Griffith University Environmental Futures Centre.

The set of six volumes by **Nan and Hugh Nicholson**, *Australian Rainforest Plants* (1985-2004), with their excellent photographs, descriptions, and advice on cultivation are also a boon to identifiers as well as being a delight to browsers. These include plants from Tasmania to North Queensland. The authors ran a nursery at Terania Creek near Lismore for twenty years promoting the cultivation of Australian's beautiful rainforest flora.

AUSTRALIAN
**Rainforest
Plants I**
Nan & Hugh Nicholson

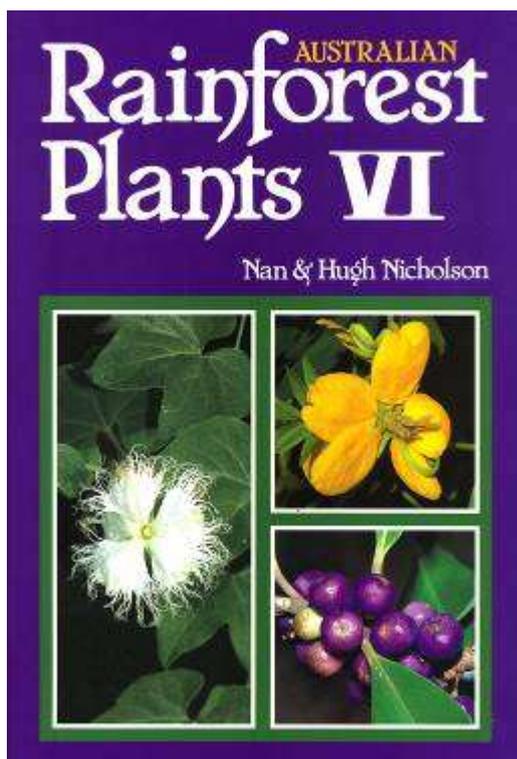
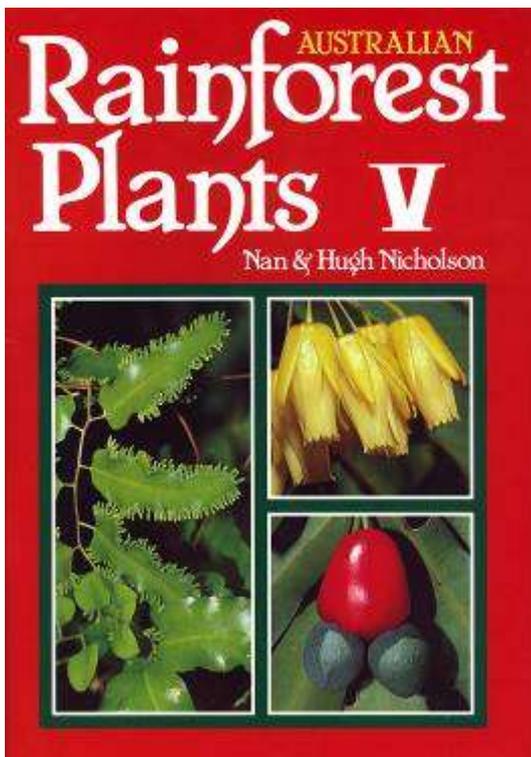


AUSTRALIAN
**Rainforest
Plants II**
Nan & Hugh Nicholson



AUSTRALIAN
**Rainforest
Plants IV**
Nan & Hugh Nicholson





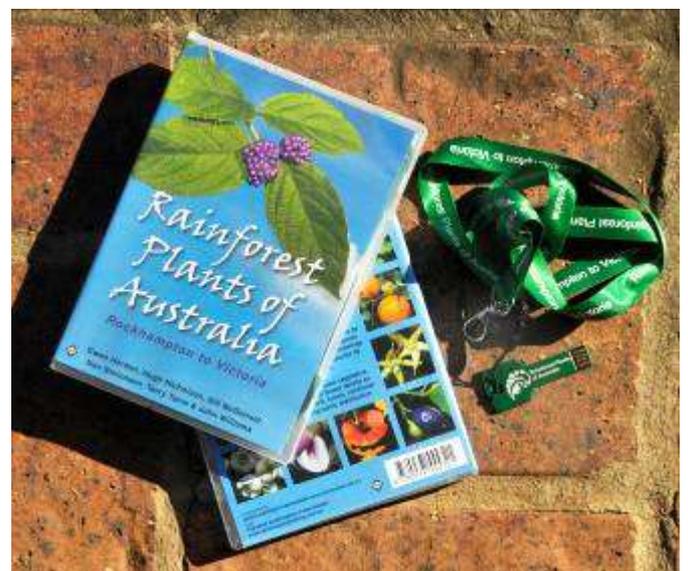
In 2014 a significant development has been the publication of *Rainforest Plants of Australia: Rockhampton to Victoria* by Gwen Harden, Hugh Nicholson, Bill McDonald, Nan Nicholson, Terry Tame and John Williams.

Terry Tame established the herbarium at the Hunter Region Botanic Gardens. The usefulness of an interactive key to rainforest plants

became evident. After discussions with Gwen it was decided that it should cover the area included in the Red Book and Green Book that were being updated. Terry imported the information from these books and did much of the original setting out and 'scoring' for both the species and sections included on the final USB. Terry also prepared the diagrams and maps for the various rainforest types.

Within the DVD-type box is a USB stick that provides illustrated descriptive information and an interactive key (using the Lucid software) to species of rainforest trees, shrubs and climbing plants of subtropical eastern mainland Australia, from Rockhampton to Victoria. Each of the 1139 species has a factsheet with description, line drawings and images. In all, over 12,000 images are included.

Now the data from the previous books as well as a large number of the Nicholson photographs are available in digital form. This is a marvellous resource for those of us who so admire and are fascinated by our rainforest flora. The vast knowledge of its authors who, it is stated, "spent hundreds of thousands of hours developing this information" is now recorded and at our fingertips and I cannot recommend this more confidently.



Front and back of the box and USB stick.

Visit GWEN HARDEN PUBLISHING at www.rainforests.net.au and TERANIA RAINFOREST PUBLISHING at www.rainforestpublishing.com.au .

Allan Stiles

The Grey Kangaroo PhilipRush

(We often call each of our large male kangaroos "Old Man Kangaroo." Why we do this is uncertain, but this poem gives some reasons that may have been instrumental in giving our big 'roos this title)

We call him Old Man Kangaroo,
But I'm not certain why we do;
Perhaps we are alluding to
The greying hair of me and you?
Well that, at least for me, is true!

Behaviour could give us a clue
Of why he's Old Man Kangaroo.
Like many men, when years accrue,
They have a scratch, and have a chew,
And social niceties eschew.

Beneath Australian skies of blue
He takes a rest the daylight through,
As many of our old men do,
And maybe you enjoy it too,
Like Mister Old Man Kangaroo.

We find that Old Man Kangaroo
Enjoys his female retinue;
But I'd not want to misconstrue
Comparisons with blokes I knew,
I guess I'll leave that up to you!

Like 'gramps' from Cairns to Uluru,
He'd rather peace than much ado;
He doesn't stand for ballyhoo,
And so he's Old Man Kangaroo –
I guess that's fair enough, don't you?



The Teams by Henry Lawson, from *In the Days When the World Was Wide*, 1896

Henry Lawson, "The Peoples Poet", was born on the goldfields near Grenfell on 7th June, 1867. Soon after his birth, his father Niels Hertzberg Larsen anglicised his surname and Niels became Peter Lawson. Deafness plagued Henry all his life.

In 1883 Henry and his mother Louisa moved to Sydney. From his first poem, 'A Song of the Republic' published in the Bulletin in 1887 Lawson was one of only a few writers who could reach out to the ordinary Australian. Henry Lawson died in Abbotsford, 2 September, 1922.

The Teams Henry Lawson

A cloud of dust on the long white road,
And the teams go creeping on
Inch by inch with the weary load;
And by the power of the greenhide goad
The distant goal is won.

With eyes half-shut to the blinding dust,
And necks to the yokes bent low,
The beasts are pulling as bullocks must;
And the shining tires might almost rust
While the spokes are turning slow.

With face half-hid 'neath a broad-brimmed hat
That shades from the heat's white waves,
And shouldered whip with its greenhide plait,
The driver plods with a gait like that
Of his weary, patient slaves.

He wipes his brow, for the day is hot,
And spits to the left with spite;
He shouts at "Bally", and flicks at "Scot",
And raises dust from the back of "Spot",
And spits to the dusty right.

He'll sometimes pause as a thing of form
In front of a settler's door,
And ask for a drink, and remark, "It's warm,"
Or say, "There's signs of a thunderstorm;"
But he seldom utters more.

But the rains are heavy on roads like these;
And, fronting his lonely home,
For weeks together the settler sees
The teams bogged down to the axletrees,
Or ploughing the sodden loam.

And then when the roads are at their worst,
The bushman's children hear
The cruel blows of the whips reversed
While bullocks pull as their hearts would burst,
And bellow with pain and fear.

And thus with little joy or rest
Are the long, long journeys done;
And thus - 'tis a cruel war at best -
Is distance fought in the mighty West,
And the lonely battles won.

REPS MEETINGS FOR 2016

Dates for your diary:

Friday 8 April 2016 at 7.30pm

Do you love the environment and don't like methane messing it up? Do you love your cattle and sheep, wish they didn't produce so much and grew faster? More meat, milk and wool – less methane. **Professor John Black** will talk about the exciting outcomes – and that's just so far – of the **National Livestock Methane Program**. It aims to reduce methane emissions while increasing productivity of Australia's livestock. Methane, animal productivity and environmental sustainability are very closely linked. Scientists have identified a range of treatments – supplements, forages, genetics – which producers can use to lower methane emissions and increase productivity. He will reveal a lot more in his talk and in answer to your questions!

Friday 10th June at 7.30pm

Film on saving the Brush-tailed Rock-wallabies in the Kangaroo Valley.

Friday 12th August at 7.30pm

September Bushwalk TBA

October 14th Speaker TBA

Friday 11th November at 7.30pm

AGM and presentation – speaker TBA

Friday 9th December Christmas party

BUDAWANGIA is an e-newsletter for all those interested in the native plants of the NSW south coast. Contact: Dr Kevin Mills,
kevinmillskma@gmail.com

HELP CARE FOR OUR NATURE RESERVE

1st Wednesday of each month
from 9:30am till noon.

Please bring garden gloves. More volunteers would be greatly appreciated. Everyone is welcome.

Details: Helen Tranter 4885 1394 or
NPWS in business hours: 4887 8253.

CAALANG CREEK WORKING BEES

The last Saturday of every month at 9:30am
onwards, subject to the weather.

Please come and join us for as long as you are able. Don't forget water, hat and gloves. We have tools available, but bring your own if you can. Caalang Creek volunteers meet at the footbridge in Hampden Park.

Queries to Steve Douglas 4271 4957 or
Leon Hall 4888 2222.

REPS MEMBERSHIP

Membership is from November to November and we are looking forward to another great year in 2016. If you are not yet a member, please consider becoming one.

Helen Tranter ph.4885 1394

CONTACT REPS

Those who are interested in supporting our aims are welcome to join REPS. Our aim is to promote the preservation and enhancement of the Robertson environment. We welcome contact with individuals and other community groups. For further information and subscriptions please contact:

President – Peter Glass on 4885 1921,
Vice-President – David Mee on 4885 1483
or REPS, PO Box 3045, Robertson 2577

Photographs supplied by David Mee.

This newsletter is named for the beautiful local tree, *Eucryphia moorei*, known as Pinkwood.

Articles for *Eucryphia* may be sent to the editors,
Allan Stiles and Sheila McInnes

stilesaljen@bigpond.com.

VISIT THE REPS WEBSITE

www.reps.org.au
