

NEWSLETTER  
AUTUMN 2018  
NUMBER 95

FRIENDS OF THE WAITE ARBORETUM INC.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Free Guided Arboretum walks

The first Sunday of every month  
at 11.00 am.

Walks meet at Urrbrae House on the  
lawn

More details at:

[www.adelaide.edu.au/arboretum/  
walks/](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/arboretum/walks/)

FWA Committee Meeting

Wednesday 6 June 9:30

What's on at Urrbrae House

More details at:

[www.adelaide.edu.au/waite-historic/  
whatson/](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/waite-historic/whatson/)

If you are interested in becoming  
a volunteer guide in the Waite  
Arboretum, or if you would like to  
join the Friends of the Waite Ar-  
boretum Committee, please con-  
tact the Friends.



**Patron:** Sophie Thomson

**President:** Dr Wayne Harvey, **Vice-President:** Terry Langham

**Secretary:** Johanna Crosby, **Treasurer:** Ramute Stankevicius

**Editors:** Jenny Birvé, **email:** jabyacka620@gmail.com

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*Dracaena draco* ASPARAGACEAE Dragon Tree Tenerife and Gran Canaria, Canary  
Islands 1929 #467 JB

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## Report from the President Beth Johnstone OAM

### Autumn 2018

Every New Year brings new things and the hope that this year will top the previous one.

We are well into 2018 and there are many good things to cheer us, however rain, heavy soaking rain, has not been one of the good things. The long term forecast is not one to make one cheer, especially when we look at trees in the Arboretum. The drier seasons brings a need to plan for strategies to adapt to climate change.

One of our "good things" was the Film event that went very well and seemed to be enjoyed by our members. We are exploring the possibility of another Film Event later this year.

Another was the Basketry Exhibition that opened on 17<sup>th</sup> February and attracted a steady stream of visitors. The Friends and Basketry South Australia have been collaborating for some years now and the friendly cooperation is a very pleasant experience.

The Baskets on display are so varied and interesting in appearance and they just seem to get better each year. It was such a pleasure to watch Basketry members making baskets as they looked after the exhibition.



President, Friends of the Waite Arboretum, Beth Johnstone OAM and Vice-President Marilyn Gilbertson OAM, at the opening of the Basketry Exhibition. EB

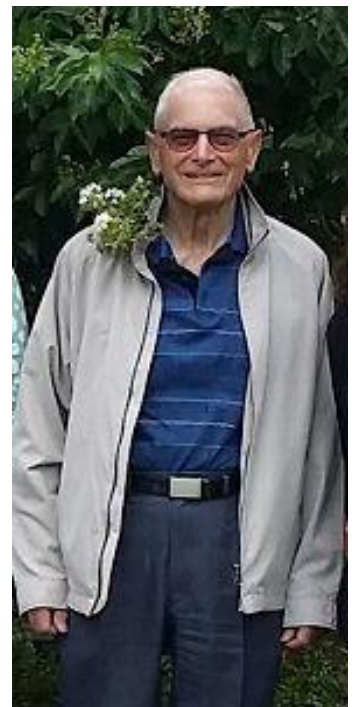
Another good thing is our staff. The Curator Dr Kate Delaporte has been very busy this year making plans for maintenance and formulating new ideas to promote the Arboretum. It has been a very busy time for Kate as she has a considerable lecturing workload.

In the role of Coordinator of Garden Volunteers, Erica Boyle has demonstrated her great skills at organising the work of both new and long-term volunteers. The gardeners have discovered her competence at problem solving and her considerable knowledge of the digital technology that she employs to benefit all involved.

The committee agreed at the last meeting early in April to transfer \$20,000 to be used within the Arboretum. This will allow the Signage Project group to activate plans for improved signage, starting in the northwest corner. Two thousand dollars will be used by the staff to produce items to attract children.

This is my last report as I have served the requisite time on the committee. I am most grateful to all those members of the committee with whom I have worked over the past ten years.

It has been a privilege and I sincerely thank each and everyone. My particular thanks goes to Marilyn Gilbertson who has been a supportive and hard working Vice President, Peter Nicholls who has been a treasured Treasurer, and Terry Langham for his ongoing enthusiasm for making 'things'.



Terry Langham and Peter Nicholls. Many thanks for your support and hard work— Beth Johnstone. EB.



## 2018 Arboretum Report



**Dr Kate Delaporte**

“Raindrops are falling on my head.....”

At last. Some rain – after something like 110 days with no rain greater than 4mm, I’d almost forgotten what it’s like. I live in the Hills, and we’ve had ~20mm overnight, not so much down on the plain and in the Arboretum, but it’s so welcome and hopefully it’s the start of a generous autumn and winter.

Over the last months, many of the Arboretum specimens have shown signs of water and heat stress; for some, it’s a yearly event, for others, it is uncommon. Is this going to become the norm – long dry periods followed by heavy rainfall events, which change the way the plants will grow and what will/won’t survive and what will thrive in our rain-fed Arboretum? Over the few years, we will be looking at our future plant directions – where will we look to find new genera and species to replant where there are inevitable losses? We need to review and understand the new climate models to ascertain where in the world to go, and the hard decision as to whether our older specimens that are now regularly suffering from water stress, should be supported or let go. If anyone has any thoughts on that, I’d value them, please let me know ([kate.delaporte@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:kate.delaporte@adelaide.edu.au)).

I thought it time to properly introduce myself to you - some of you know me already, some have attended presentations about my *Eucalyptus* research, but many of you won’t have. I’ll try to be succinct!

From a long line of South Aussies, I grew up in the SE of SA on a small mixed farming property, surrounded by winter swamps, flat land with occasional hills covered in scrub, pine trees, and gorgeous rugged coastline. My love of plants started at a very early age – I bought my first native *Thryptomene* from Neville Bonney’s Nangula Plant Nursery, Millicent, when I was about 8. I spent some time learning about horticulture at home in our 3 acre garden, at Mr Gambier TAFE when I finished school, and at various rural properties where I worked with cut flowers – both native and exotic.

I undertook a Bachelor of Agricultural Science, Horticulture Major, at the University of Adelaide, Waite Campus, and completed an Honours Project with Professor Margaret Sedgley on *Banksia* development. My association with Margaret continued through my PhD candidature, where I worked on development of eucalypts for ornamental horticulture, graduating in 2000. The Playford Memorial Trust supported me throughout that degree, and I have maintained very close links with the Trust since and am now a Board member. My PhD work generated considerable interest in the Australian cut flower and nursery industry, and was supported almost continuously for the next 17 years, as we progressed through various projects supported by the Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation (now Agrifutures Australia), Horticulture Australia Limited (now Hort Innovation), AusIndustry, BioInnovation SA (now TechIn SA) and some very far seeing innovative industry partners. If you wish to read more about me, please refer to:

[www.adelaide.edu.au/directory/kate.delaporte](http://www.adelaide.edu.au/directory/kate.delaporte)

I watched the early animation of Dr Suess’ book “The Lorax” when I was very young (an actual film, on an actual projector!), and it had a profound effect on me. Now, I am the Lorax, I speak for the Arboretum trees and many others. I seek to educate and engage all generations with trees, our environment, sustainability, treading lightly; being the Curator of the Arboretum has provided me with a platform to undertake that education and engagement with a much wider audience than ever before.

We at the Arboretum have grand new plans. Our overarching mission is to raise awareness of the importance of nature and trees, with a focus on engagement through activities. We are developing programs to bring younger people into the Arboretum through interactions with local kindergartens and schools and formal and informal programs. I have established a Horticultural Internship Program to enable Agricultural Science students at the Waite to undertake horticultural related activities within the Arboretum, the Urrbrae House Gardens, the Waite Conservation Reserve, and the Waite Campus Orchards and Vineyards, in collaboration with the School of Agriculture, Food and Wine and Orchard Manager Phil Earl. Running through the cooler and wetter parts of the year, a small group of students will learn to prune, weed, plant, collect seeds, take cuttings; all of those wonderful fun things that horticulture is, and in the process, develop an appreciation of the amazing and unique site that is the Waite Campus.

### 2018 Report Dr Kate Delaporte continued

This engagement will lead on to the development of an intensive horticultural subject, to be run at the Waite in future years, to provide formal learning about Horticulture, with a fair bit of “trees are amazing and we would do all we can to preserve and grow them” underlying everything we do and say. We also have increased our interactions with TAFESA students and others studying Horticulture/Aboriculture/Conservation & Land Management at all levels, and I am encouraging all students to become Friends of the Waite Arboretum, to learn even more.

We have many ideas, which I will share in later newsletters.... Just a few tidbits – new signage, a bush food garden, the 2021 World Federation of Rose Societies, and a tome “2028, celebrating 100 years of the Waite Arboretum and all who work(ed) in Her” .....

In order to achieve our grand plans, I rely heavily on my small Arboretum team (Andrew and Erica), my research team (Nick and Chi), Lynette and Jennifer, and my larger network of colleagues, Friends, and volunteers. As always, I thank you all for your encouragement and support so far, in particular to the friends of the Waite Arboretum Committee and others who share their time and mentor me so selflessly. Whoever you are, where ever you are, please do contact me, should you have any issues or queries or thoughts on new directions or ideas for the Arboretum. The door is always open (figuratively), as are my ears and my mind.

In closing – “Send ‘er down, Huey”

[For the curious - <http://www.abc.net.au/site-archive/rural/telegraph/content/2010/s3094859.htm>]



*Cupressus lusitanica* CUPRESSACEAE #565 C. America. Trees first bear fruit from 6 years on. Flowering takes place at the driest time of the year and cones take 2 years to mature. JB.

### Presentation of awards at 24th Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Waite Arboretum.



Dr Jennifer Gardner receiving Honorary Life Membership for her commitment and dedication to the development of the Arboretum and Urrbrae Precinct, from the Friends of the Waite Arboretum. EB.



Beth Johnstone OAM receiving Honorary Life Membership from the Friends of the Waite Arboretum, for her leadership, passion and commitment to the promotion and care of Peter Waite's gift to the people of South Australia. EB.



## Friends News

### @ Nature's Pace

#### Basketry Exhibition, 17 February – 1 March 2018

The exhibition which was hosted by Friends of The Waite Arboretum together with Basketry SA and held in Urrbrae House was a great success. Over 600 visitors came to the Urrbrae precinct to enjoy the delights of the items on display, the historic house and the lovely gardens.

Basketry SA has inherited and embraced a rich legacy of basketry knowledge and techniques and with enthusiasm its members continue to keep the art/craft alive. The exhibition brought many of the stands of experience, skills and creative energy of each member exhibiting. Examples of weaving techniques by Indigenous communities together with books about their crafts were on display and created much interest.

An enthusiastic crowd attended the opening of the exhibition by Dr Lucy Sutherland, Director Botanical Gardens and State Herbarium, SA. She spoke of the importance of plants in people's lives and embraced basketry with a passion.

Prior to the opening a guided walk in the arboretum, "Plant Fibre Materials Coming From Country", was conducted by Jenny Birve and Graham Bald, with assistance from Linda Blake and Jennifer Gardner. It was very popular with over 40 people attending.

Sales of items from the main exhibition as well as smaller items from the "trading table" were very pleasing resulting in a commission of approximately \$1500 for FWA.

Fourteen FWA volunteers helped supervise the exhibition over 13 days, welcoming visitors and talking about the house, gardens and arboretum. This represented a total of 75 hours of work in kind.

It was a pleasure working with members of Basketry SA. The exhibition was an excellent vehicle for FWA to promote awareness of the arboretum and to raise funds for its care and development. Thank you to all who helped make this event so successful.

Marilyn Gilbertson Photos EB.

<https://sites.google.com/site/basketrysainc>

#### Reminder

Mediterranean Garden Society Working Bee  
on Sunday 20th May from 9 to 12.





## Friends News

# Volunteers are great!

That is not only a hashtag I use on the @waitearboretumandgardens Instagram and Facebook posts! Our volunteers are one of the main reasons why even after the hot and dry summer we have just experienced, the Urrbrae House Gardens are looking glorious.

Our team of volunteers is large, more than forty people give their time and love to the plants in our gardens. Some of them come every Tuesday and every Friday morning, others on either Tuesdays or Fridays, others twice a month, and a few come just a couple of hours sometimes... and we thank them all!

Every minute spent with a delicate rose, with the scented plants in the Sensory Garden, with the tough and hardy natives of the Garden of Discovery or the colorful perennials of the Coach House Garden, is a minute that makes our gardens thrive and shine even under the most challenging weather conditions. That is why every minute and every volunteer counts!

We are very happy to welcome new volunteers every month, and it is good to see friendships grow with common interests in plants. I am very fortunate to be working with these members of our community. In the end, there is something that we all have in common, and it is our passion for nature, and sharing this with others!

Our volunteers perform the most diverse activities across the Gardens, Arboretum, and Conservation Reserve. Today, I am just referring to the Gardens' volunteers, but I will definitely be writing about the other groups in coming editions.

If this Newsletter reached you it is surely because you also have something in common with us! So, if you have some free time and are willing to be outdoors in a magnificent environment, while enjoying gardening with a lovely group of people, don't hesitate to send me an email at [erica.boyle@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:erica.boyle@adelaide.edu.au) or call me on a Thursday (9 am to 2 pm) 8313-7405 to arrange your first visit as a potential garden volunteer. You won't be disappointed!

Erica Boyle



Neutrog donates fertilisers for the Urrbrae House Gardens and the Waite Arboretum



Ian volunteering and tending the garden beds. EB.



Rosemary and Fiona tending the rose arbour.  
John with the roses on the main lawns. EB.



## The Unexpected Guest. Laurel Crouch

A 'welcome mat' for any garden is to attract as many beneficial insects and other pollinators into its abode. The Coach House Garden's intention is to provide a place and purpose for these visitors to come. The interaction between the garden and wildlife has also extended to attract other visitors including: a koala galloping through, a curious family of ducks, kookaburras and regular visits by magpies wanting a worm.



Koala galloping towards the Pepper Tree. Photo: LC

One recent visitor to the garden has been a short beaked Echidna (*Tachyglossus aculeatus*), which had been providing some rustling from within the olive hedge. Whilst it is not unusual to hear the rustling, the real surprise was to see it walk out from under the hedge.



Echidna departing after its stay. Photo: TM

Echidnas are meant to be notoriously shy, but this one was not concerned with the human movement and voices surrounding it. It continued to walk nonchalantly through the garden and up the hill towards Waite Road. As to its comings and goings, it is a mystery. Although, in the direction it was heading, it is highly probable that it located to the Waite Conservation Reserve.

The unexpected guest in question may have come and gone, but it has now become a wanted species. Its whereabouts and snapshot is a prized possession by the Echidna CSI (Conservation Science Initiative). Citizen Scientists are currently wanted to solve the echidna mysteries by gathering as much data as possible to tend towards their conservation.

This is an initiative of the Grützner research team at the School of Biological Sciences University of Adelaide. They need help to identify echidna populations on mainland Australia and determine if they are under threat. Information is needed from Citizen Scientists through the collection of data and material to assist in managing echidna numbers and develop molecular tools to better understand them.

The Citizen Scientist can communicate via an Echidna CSI App that has been developed to allow people to upload photos of echidnas and their location details. Scats are also required (if possible) to send by post to the University of Adelaide for analysis. Since its launch in August 2017, over 1,500 people have registered on the mobile app.

Submissions can also be made through the website at:

<https://biocollect.ala.org.au> which contributes data to the Atlas of Living Australia.

Over 1,200 echidna sightings have been received from across Australia. Locally, five other sightings have been recorded around the Waite Conservation Reserve and its surrounds this year, including a Waite Campus car park. The echidnas' activities recorded have included digging and foraging, walking and sleeping on the walking trail. The outcome of the ongoing survey can be viewed from this biodiversity database where an additional feature is a shared resource map. The map allows the viewer to observe clusters of sightings or pinpoint a particular area within Australia.

Our unexpected guest's stay has not gone unnoticed. Through the raising of public awareness, this echidna has now been submitted into the CSI research project.

The 'welcome mat' extends out for its return.





## 24<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Friends of Waite Arboretum, Monday 16 April 2018

Forty three people attended the meeting including Sam Duluc MP, Member for Waite, and Nicole Flint MP, Federal Member for Boothby.

Beth Johnstone chaired the meeting, her final duty as President before retiring after serving 10 years on the committee and three years as President. Her commitment and passion for the promotion and development of Peter Waite's gift to the people of South Australia was acknowledged with the conferring of Life Membership. We wish her well in the future.

Dr Jennifer Gardner was also presented with Life membership in recognition of establishing the Friends of Waite Arboretum and her many years of dedication to the development of the arboretum.

Dr Peter Nicholls presented the audited annual financial statement, his final report after serving 15 years on the committee. He first served 2002 – 2012, as a committee member. Following a 12 month mandatory break he returned to serve a further five years as Treasurer. His hard work and meticulous accounting has been greatly appreciated. We wish him well in his retirement.

The following people were nominated for the 2018 FWA committee and met briefly after the meeting to elect office bearers.

President – Dr Wayne Harvey

Vice-President – Terry Langham

Secretary – Jo Crosby

Treasurer – Ramute Stankevicius

Newsletter Editor – Jenny Birvé

Curator (Ex Officio) – Dr Kate Delaporte

Committee members – Erica Boyle, Marilyn Gilbertson



Marne Durnin giving her talk "If you go down to the (grassy!) woods today...", to the Friends of the Waite Arboretum at the Annual General Meeting. EB.

## Marne Durnin gave a talk at the Friends of the Waite Arboretum Annual General Meeting on April 16.

Marne began by showing us a slide of a property, indicating an area where she wanted to restore native grassland. With only 1 percent of South Australian native grasslands remaining compared to pre-European settlement, re-establishing native grasses is important for the threatened grassy woodland ecosystem. Marne talked about the benefits and the problems with grassland restoration. For example, the weeds must first be removed. Weeds have seed banks which means year after year managing weeds, using different methods for different regions.

Scraping off the topsoil is one method to remove weed seeds and phosphorus to prepare the ground for native seed restoration. Other methods to remove weeds include microwaving the soil, burning and using smoke.

Jenny Birvé

Marne left us with these words and plans for the future.

## Bring back the grasslands: M's quest



With darkness drawing in Marne entertained the Friends with a yarn: the story of 'M', who wanted to make a grassland but discovered that they had mostly disappeared. The main culprits were introduced grazers, cultivation, fertiliser and weeds. Luckily, there were people who wanted to restore grasslands so that their species could survive into the future. They worked out that weed control, weed control and weed control were the 3 keys to success. 'M' learned that these people were bringing back grasslands by removing weedy topsoil and resowing with native species but found out that it didn't work very well when the soils were shallow or sloping. Always restless, 'M' decided to continue her quest by looking for other ways to restore native grasslands and set off to explore microwaves, shallow harrowing, cover crops and fire. Next year, you might see 'M' setting up experiments in the NW Corner (but not with the fire part!).

Marne Durnin



## @ NATURE'S PACE EXHIBITION Terry Langham

The bi-annual collaborative effort between FWA and Basketry SA (BSA) once again was an outstanding success. The setting of the exhibition in Urrbrae House and with the Waite Arboretum walks enhanced the enjoyment of the Waite Historic Precinct. The exhibition was a collection of functional, sculptural and art creations using botanical and manufactured materials.

For BSA members it was an opportunity to display and sell their works in an exhibition format.

For the Friends of the Waite Arboretum it was an opportunity to raise funds for use in the Arboretum and promote the Arboretum as a place for research, education, biodiversity conservation and recreational use.

The exhibition was opened by Dr Lucy Sutherland, Director of the Botanic Gardens of S.A.

### WEARABLE JEWELLERY

The exhibition included wearable jewellery: bush brooches (part of a Cockatoo Creek collection); pendants, necklaces, earrings created using metal threads woven with glass and acrylic beads.

### BASKETRY

*Draceana draco* leaves were visible in a 1 metre wide round ball constructed with grapevine.

**Sea shells** were combined with raffia, *Chasmanthe* to form a bowl.

**River Red Gum, English Elm** tree suckers were used as framework materials alongside *Draceana draco* twined into string to create a sculptural and functional native bee hotel.

**Washed up beach rope** were used to create baskets decorated with gum nut seeds and shells.

**A Bilby I'm All Ears and Little Brown Birds** were very eye catching in the recycling of plastic bags and the use of wrapping technique with grass and bark.

**Pine needles, palm inflorescence**, *Casuarina* branchlets, *Philodendron*, flax, jasmine, yellow iris, cumbungi were just a few of plant materials that could be viewed.

### EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

Many of the artists worked the title, and from this, created the piece.

*Wren @ Rest, Sunset Bowl, Quandong Harvest, Walnut Whirl, Seaside Basket 111, Snail Trail, a Small Thank You, War on Waste Bark and Beans, Savoir – Faire, Alphabet Native Bee Hotel, A labour of Love, Dragon Bowl with Stone, Calabash, Carried Away Road Kill Illuminated, Contortions, Tenacity, Randon Platter, Take time Out... , and Round and Round.*

## *Curtisia dentata*, Assegai

About half way down the Arboretum there are two medium-sized, evergreen trees that are quite inconspicuous until late autumn when they develop clusters of decorative cream coloured fruit which persist on the tree until spring. The trees are 50-year old specimens of *Curtisia dentata* which is native to southern Africa where it commonly occurs in forests from sea level to 1800 m. The tree varies in habit depending on its situation: in forests it grows to a tall, straight-trunked tree, on grassy mountain slopes and in coastal scrub forests it is a small bushy tree. *C. dentata* grows best in good soil, medium-moist conditions and adequate light.



*Curtisia dentata* Assegai Arboretum specimens #500A planted 1971, #500B planted 1970 EH

*Curtisia* is a monotypic genus (has only one species) and is the only southern African member of the Family Cornaceae, the dogwood family. The family gets its name from the Latin *cornu* meaning horn, referring to the typically hard timber of dogwoods. The genus *Curtisia* is named in honour of William Curtis (1746-1799), founder of Curtis's Botanical Magazine, first published in 1786 and still going today. The specific name *dentata* is Latin for toothed, and refers to the toothed leaves. The origin of the common name 'Assegai' is uncertain. It may derive from the Arabic name *azzaghayah*, that was adopted by the Portuguese and then, with spelling variations, by the Dutch, or from the indigenous use of the wood for spear (assegai) shafts, or from the resemblance of the leaves to the broad blade of an assegai.

*C. dentata* is a medium to tall evergreen tree, 2 to 12 m wide and up to 20 m in height in ideal conditions. The bark is smooth and grey or cinnamon-coloured in young specimens but it becomes rough, dark brown to black and deeply square-fissured with age.

continued...

### *Curtisia dentata*

The leaves are simple, egg-shaped with pointed tips and coarsely toothed edges, and are arranged in opposite pairs. The upper surface is smooth and dark glossy green whereas the undersurface is grey-green with conspicuous veins. The undersurface of the leaf, the leaf stalk and the twigs are all covered with small, reddish hairs.

Very young growth is velvety to the touch and bronze-gold in colour. The small flowers are inconspicuous, cream or fawn-coloured and velvety, and appear in branched sprays at the ends of twigs in spring and summer. The flowers are odourless and secrete no nectar. The honey-bee does not visit the flowers for pollen and experiments have shown that the species is almost entirely self-pollinated, though cross-pollination by wind may take place



*Curtisia dentata* leaf form with pointed tips and coarsely toothed

The fruit is a small, rounded to oval, fleshy berry, about 10 mm in diameter. The fruits are white, or white tinged with pink, sometimes becoming red, and crowned with the remains of the calyx. The fruits contain a four-chambered nut, one seed per chamber, although not all four seeds are always formed. Fruits are edible but bitter. They remain on the tree for a long time and can be very decorative.

*C. dentata* retains its leaves for 2-4 or more years and does not create much leaf litter. It is deep-rooted, does not form a heavy crown and has remarkably tough branches that are rarely broken by severe winds.



The fruit of *Curtisia dentata*. EH

In its native habitat the bitter fruits are eaten by birds, bats, monkeys, baboons and wild pigs. The timber of *C. dentata* is strong and durable and was used by indigenous people and by early colonists for wagon building, for tool handles and for furniture, rafters and flooring. It is reddish in colour and resembles mahogany, and is extremely tough, strong and elastic with a fine grain. Over-exploitation has left the timber in short supply. The bark, twigs and leaves were once used for tanning leather. In traditional medicine the bark is used to treat stomach ailments, diarrhoea and as a blood purifier and aphrodisiac.

*C. dentata* is best propagated by seed as cuttings do not readily form adventitious roots. Seedlings should be kept moist and grown in the shade. Once established the tree is quite fast growing and somewhat drought tolerant. The Assegai would make a decorative bird-attracting addition to many parks and gardens.

Eileen Harvey

Material for this article was sourced from

[www.plantzafrica.com/plantcd/curtisident.htm](http://www.plantzafrica.com/plantcd/curtisident.htm)



### ***Tamarix aphylla* and problems of appreciation**

I do not have good memories of this species. It reminds me of hot northerly winds, drought, sheep stretching and reaching up to get any piece of the leaf that was often the only green matter to be found. The sheep were after the salt on the leaves of the plant. Miserable shade and sheep competing to stand under the tree. I remember looking across a denuded landscape to see an Athel tree in the distance and the catastrophe of land degradation all around. Then came the difficulty of trying to cut the wood with a chain saw and burning it in the kitchen wood oven. It did not cut or burn well and gave off poor heat and lots of smoke. It seemed no animal lived in it by choice and other trees did not grow near it as the leaf litter was so salty. The high levels of salt excreted by the Athel tree can have a dramatic effect on metal objects underneath the tree. Parking trailers, farm machinery or other metal objects under the shade of an Athel tree can cause rust to set in.

The genus *Tamarix* is made up of 54 species of shrubs and low trees. False tamarisks *Myricaria*, include 10 species. They have deep-ranging roots and long, slender branches with numerous small, gray-green, scalelike leaves. Clusters of small pink flowers, hanging at the ends of branches or from the trunks, give the plants a feathery appearance. Each flower has 4 or 5 free sepals, 4 or 5 petals, and from 4 to 10 stamens. The petals and stamens arise from a fleshy disk. In *Tamarix* the stamens are separate; in *Myricaria* they are united. The fruit is a capsule with numerous seeds; each seed has a long tuft of hairs at one end.

The Athel tree is fast growing with water available, 30 cm a month and has roots 10-15 m around the plant. During the making of the Suez Canal they found *Tamarix* roots to a depth of 50m. It can thrive in places where the water table contains over 20 per cent of salt by excreting salt from glands in the leaf. Soil can be desalinated by growing salt absorbing plants like tamarisk and harvesting them.



*Tamarix aphylla* wood. Hard to cut, will not burn and termites avoid it. JB.

The Bible tells a story called "The Treaty at Beersheba" in which Abraham plants tamarisk trees. Most botanists and Christian scholars are unanimous in their agreement that the trees that Abraham planted were the *Tamarix aphylla*. Beersheba is the only place that the Bible recorded Abraham planting trees. Today there is still an ancient well located at, or near this site called Abraham's well and tamarisk trees grow in the area.

Yet every year I stumble across the tamarisk again and I am beholden to the sight of the delicate pink colour of the tree in full flower, its feathery flowers covered by bees.

Jenny Birvé

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamarix\\_aphylla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tamarix_aphylla)

<https://godasagardener.com/2011/03/24/abraham-the-tamarisk/>

<https://www.britannica.com/plant/tamarisk>

"Plant and Planet" Anthony Huxley



*Tamarix aphylla* Athel TAMARICACEAE Feathery flowers beginning to open. JB.



*Tamarix parviflora* Small flower tamarisk. TAMARICACEAE #384 NE Africa, W. Asia. Each tiny flower has four pink petals. JB.



## AUTUMN IN THE ARBORETUM 2018



*Flindersia australis* RUTACEAE Crow's ash, Australian teak 1929 The fertilised flowers on the inflorescence show the development of the capsules, which grow up to 15cm in length. They split open to release the winged seeds. The Australian Teak is well known for industrial and commercial purposes. Most popular uses include making furniture and cabinets and for particle board manufacturing. The timber is also used for flooring and boat building. NSW. QLD. #925 A9 JB.



*Cupressus macrocarpa* CUPRESSACEAE 1962. Golden Weeping Cypress cv. Aurea Saligna. Stanley J. Palmer described this cultivar as growing with long cascades of weeping, golden-yellow, thread-like foliage on a pyramidal tree. Stanley J. Palmer (1990). Palmer's Manual of Trees, Shrubs and Climbers. #1247 JB

*Jagera pseudorhus* SAPINDACEAE Foam-Bark Tree. 1955 The species is named for the saponin foam that forms on the bark after heavy rain. The bark was used as a fish poison by Aborigines. NSW. QLD. #863 JB



*Dracaena schizantha* ASPARAGACEAE 1979 Dracaena is a genus of about 120 species of trees and succulent shrubs. A noisy miner (*Manorina melanocephala*) is startled out of the Dracaena taking the spoils. Somalia, Ethiopia #318 JB