

Wednesday Walk – Campbell Park, ACT – 7 June 2017

We left the more sunny areas of Canberra and the surrounding countryside to walk through a foggy morning at Campbell Park. We took a mostly northerly path along a track of red soil with ironstone rocks along its edge. Some of the rocks had so much iron in them that they were glossy and quite heavy.

There are some very ancient trees in the Campbell Park woodland, with wide girth and exposed, robust old roots keeping them firmly in the ground. The trees were mostly Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*) and Blakely's Red Gum (*E. blakelyi*) interspersed with a few Apple Box (*E. bridgesiana*). On the slightly higher slopes, a few white-trunked Scribbly Gums (*E. rossii*) appeared through the mist. A few of the trees, but not many, had Mistletoes growing from their branches — a low-hanging one was identified as *Amyema miquelii*.

There were very few understorey shrubs — just a few Silver Wattles (*Acacia dealbata*) and a few *Cassinia quinquefaria*. But, an interesting find was a number of Kangaroo Thorn Wattles (*Acacia paradoxa*) a plant we don't often come across in this area. As its name would suggest, it's a rather thorny plant with spines up to 1.5 cm long at the base of the soft green phyllodes. On a lower track on the return trip, we did find a stand of *Hakea decurrens* in full flower and a small patch of Narrow-leaved Hop-bushes (*Dodonaea viscosa* ssp. *angustissima*) — and, nearby, a single *Acacia genistifolia* showing off a mass of cream flowers. There weren't many smaller shrubs there either. We did eventually find two Narrawa Burr plants (*Solanum cinereum*) sheltering beside a log though, and later found we were standing amongst a group of Bitter Cryptandra (*Cryptandra amara*).

The main understorey throughout the whole area was actually the Clustered Everlasting Daisy (*Chrysocephalum semipapposum*) with tall stands of it covering most of the spaces between the trees. There were a few Sticky Everlasting Daisies (*Xerochrysum viscosum*) growing amongst them, and, in the more open areas, there were some Narrow-leaved New Holland Daisies (*Vittadinia muelleri*) and the taller Woolly New Holland Daisies (*V. gracilis*). We saw two yellow flowers on a *Cymbonotus lawsonianus* plant and found a few smooth-leaved rosettes of *Solenogyne dominii*. There were not many forbs evident — they're not easy to see during winter — but we did see a few sizeable patches of *Goodenia pinnatifida* rosettes.

We made our way to Barbara's Tree for lunch — a huge ancient wrinkly Scribbly Gum (*Eucalyptus rossii*), its massive old roots reaching out from the base of the tree and bulky enough to provide seating for us. There's a photo of a previous Wednesday Walk lunch there on the cover of the September 2014 ANPS Canberra *Journal*. We searched around for a while there to see if we could find the suckering *Brachyscome dentata* but couldn't find it this time. We did, however, find a small population of the species near the entrance closer to the carpark, bearing a few white flowers.

Many of the larger trees we walked amongst on the way back had fallen or split or had dropped large branches in the past. But most had regenerated, putting out new growth to cover the scars of time — amazing old trees whose experience of this piece of the country extends back into distant ages.

By Jo Walker; Photos by Helen Brewer (HB), Gail Ritchie Knight (GRK) and Mike Shihoff (MS)



Foggy start to the day (GRK)



Still foggy (GRK)



Acacia paradoxa (HB)



Acacia pycnantha (MS)



Brachyscome dentata (HB)



Brachyscome dentata (HB)



Chrysocephalum semipapposum — dominant undergrowth (HB)



Chrysocephalum semipapposum (GRK)



Clematis microphylla (GRK)



Cymbonotus lawsonianus (HB)



Eucalyptus bridgesiana — juvenile foliage (HB)



Eucalyptus bridgesiana — juvenile foliage (HB)



Eucalyptus polyanthemus (GRK)



Goodenia pinnatifida, an unseasonal flower — usually flowers in Nov (HB)



Xerochrysum viscosum (GRK)



Vittadinia cuneata (GRK)



Vittadinia cuneata leaf (HB)



Insect pupal larval case on *Chrysocephalum semipapposum* (HB)



Brachychiton populneus (GRK)



Dew on spider's web (GRK)



Wahlenbergia communis (MS)



Eucalyptus bridgesiana (GRK)



Brachychiton populneus (GRK)



Lunch under Barbara's Tree, *Eucalyptus rossii* (MS)