

## APRIL MEETING

**Wednesday 24 April, 2024**

Knox Park Primary School, Kathryn Rd, Knoxfield. 7.45pm.

### **Alexandra Stalder: Plants of the Victorian High Country**

Alex is an alpine/sub-alpine plant enthusiast who has spent many summers in the Victorian high country photographing and identifying native flora. Alex has organised Alpine wildflower tours for the Cranbourne Friends, RBGV to Mt Hotham, Falls Creek, Lake Mountain and most recently, in January this year, to Mt Baw Baw. Alex will share with us some of the unique and endemic alpine and subalpine flora from these regions, as well as the lesser known, but equally remarkable, Cobberas Range and Nunniong High Plains.



## Calendar change: Five Slides

Jason Caruso's talk on Small Eucalypts will now be on 26 June, and Five Slides night has shifted to an earlier slot, and will now be on 22 May.

Please note: Some of the rules and some of the technical stuff has been updated – please see page 3 for further information.

## Australian natives in Africa

There are plenty of Australian native species that do very well in other countries. On page 7, you'll see just how many plants we are familiar with, Nicky has come across on her travels in the Western Cape in South Africa.

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Some of the Victorian High Country beauties we'll hear about from Alex Stalder.

L-R: *Ewartia nubigena*, Silver Ewartia or Australian Edelweiss; *Gentiana muelleriana* subsp. *muelleriana* Mueller's Snow-Gentian; *Pentachondra pumila*, Carpet Heath.  
(All photos: Alexandra Stalder)

**Hi everyone,**

As I start to type this, just before the end of March, credible Autumn rains have not fallen, and gardens are in need of a decent drink. If we don't get at least 1 mm before the end of March, then it will be the driest March on record for Melbourne. Wouldn't be much different here. I think I might have lost more plants this year than normal. When we go from abnormally wet to abnormally dry weather then it's unsurprising, especially when you factor in the age of a plant. As with humans it is generally the very young or the elderly that are at greatest risk.

What is most surprising is the resilience of so many plants. Going away for a week to Tasmania on Easter Sunday, I have been rushing to get plants in the ground and it is rock hard. It has made me reflect yet again on the importance of ground-covering plants. Unlike mulch they can't be shifted around by blackbirds and they don't break down, although they do, of course, have a lifespan. May they be long-lived and healthy!

In the meantime, the work of the garden goes on. Pruning is always a big job. I thought I was getting ahead of the game with pruning early but because of the rain there was a great regrowth response. Now I will need to prune many plants again!

I was very sorry to miss the last meeting and Bill's talk but I hope to catch up with it at the April Waverley meeting in a couple of weeks' time. **Thanks Janet**, for replacing me for the evening. I know you have had plenty of practise.

There have been some **Program Changes** in our calendar. By now you are aware that Bill Aitchison was kind enough to bring his talk on 'Nature versus Nurture' forward to our March meeting due to unexpected change in circumstances for our scheduled speaker, Jason Caruso. Jason has agreed to give his talk on small eucalypts at our June meeting which means we will be shifting our member Five

Slides night to 22 May. If you are anything like me you will at least begin thinking about what you focus on, and what story you want to tell the group.

### **ANPSA Conference 2024 – Gardens for Life**

I am sure by now you are all aware that Victoria is hosting this biannual event at The Round in Nunawading from September 31 to October 4 inclusive. Being so close to home it is a great opportunity to join in either for the full five days or for one, two or three days. The program comprises lectures at The Round on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and excursions will run from The Round on Tuesday and Thursday. It is worth noting you can only go on the excursions if you have registered for the full program.

The ANPSA Conference 2024 website is the one-stop shop for all information, registration, and payment. The early bird rate of \$585 expires at the end of June after which time the rate will go to \$650. There has already been significant uptake for the pre and post tours with the pre tour of the Grampians now closed.

So far there have been six **newsletters** which Foothills members would have received along with the Foothills newsletter as they became available. All of these are now on the website with another one coming out soon. See: <https://www.anpsa2024conference.com/>

In addition, there have been two '**Australian Plant**' journals devoted to information about the conference. Very few of our members subscribe to this national journal so if you want to see what it has to say about tours and the Conference, then these are also available with the click of a button on the website. The first edition, Spring 2023, covered the tours in detail; the latest one, Summer 2023, which only recently arriving in letterboxes, is about the conference itself. In the latest edition I have written on 'Designing Gardens for Wildlife' which is the topic of the talk I will deliver as part of the Wednesday program. I have also written up the gardens for wildlife excursion to Bev and my garden which will be a choice on the Tuesday and Thursday. Reading this edition will

give you some idea of what is on offer during the conference, but more will become available in the newsletters.

APS Maroondah has graciously decided to organise a **conference dinner**. There is a form in the upcoming newsletter for you to fill out if you want to attend. It will be a relaxed social occasion, and a chance to catch up with friends from around the country.

**Chris Larkin**

## **FIVE Slides meeting Wednesday, 22 May, 2024**

This is a favourite members' meeting and always great fun, so you are encouraged to participate. Please note that some of the rules and technical stuff has changed slightly from previous years.

### **How it works:**

- 1) Bring along FIVE slides to the meeting. They don't necessarily have to be plant related, although we do love plants and plant-y things!
- 2) You can select your slides to fit a theme or they can be a random selection of images.
- 3) On the night, be prepared to tell us a bit about each slide and/or why you chose it.

### **Rules and technical stuff:**

1. Please come to the meeting earlier than you usually do, especially if you have slides/images to share. NB: Our meetings start at 7.45 pm so we need plenty of time to load your images or slide presentation onto the computer.
2. Bring your slides on a USB on the night. Slides can be presented as single images in a folder, or you can put your images into a PowerPoint presentation.

3. Images in a **PowerPoint** presentation.

You are allowed to show five slides, with up to two images per slide.

Note that more than two images on a slide lose definition and are difficult to see, and each member also deserves a close-to-equal amount of time to talk about their slides, so please be respectful of the image limitation per slide.

4. **Single images** in a folder.

If you don't have your images in a PowerPoint presentation, then you are allowed to show up to seven images.

5) If you are unable to bring your images on a USB, then you can email them to me (Janet) at [foothills@apsvic.org.au](mailto:foothills@apsvic.org.au)

NB: If you are emailing your images to me, then it is important that you get them to me no later than the *day before* the meeting please, so that I have enough time to download them. Due to work commitments and having to set the room up for our meeting, I am unable to download emailed images on the day of the meeting.

\* The cut-off time for emailing images is 8 pm Tuesday 21 May.

### **Some ideas for themes:**

- \* Your 5 favourite plants for this time of year.
- \* What's looking gorgeous in your garden.
- \* A favourite group of plants.
- \* Plants that have special meaning for you.
- \* Unusual plants you have come across.
- \* Nature photos.
- \* Photos from your travels.
- \* Things that interest you.

Looking forward to seeing your slides!

**Janet Hodgkiss**

## Nature versus Nurture: a talk by Bill Aitchison

Bill told us the idea for this talk, the title of which was suggested by Sue Guymmer, originated about 25-30 years ago when he used to sit in on plant society meetings listening to experts talking about plants and how to grow them.

He said one of the things that stuck in his mind from those meetings was that if you're going to grow a plant you should know where it comes from and in what conditions it grows.

A common example used was *Crowea exalata* and was accompanied by comments such as "forms with longer leaves like a more shaded position" and "water requirements depend on where they come from".

To illustrate this, Bill showed two photos of *Crowea exalata*, one from the Whipstick in Victoria, a fairly dry inland area, and another from Narrabarba, a much wetter area in southern NSW. The NSW *Crowea* did indeed have longer leaves (usually an indication of a less water-stressed or shadier environment) compared to the shorter leaves of the Whipstick *Crowea*, and this suggested to Bill that what people had been saying was probably right, especially in relation to *Crowea exalata*.

Some plants however, seem to grow well and even flourish in conditions quite different to where they come from. One example of this, and slightly contradictory to the concept of "water requirements depend on where they come from" was that of *Acacia 'Scarlet Blaze'*, the rare, red form of *Acacia leprosa*.

This plant was discovered by bushwalkers in the Murrindindi Wilhelmina Falls area which has an average annual rainfall of 945 mm. However, 'Scarlet Blaze' does surprisingly well further south here in Melbourne which is generally much drier, with an average annual rainfall of 650 mm. Leigh Eley, one of our members, has successfully grown a 'Scarlet Blaze' for nearly 25 years. His 'secret' was growing it in a garden

that had river sand mixed into it (about 18 inches), which means it was well-drained and less prone to becoming waterlogged. He says it flowered prolifically and only died last year (2023), eventually succumbing to borer. If you're keen to grow *Acacia 'Scarlet Blaze'*, another tip is to give it a protected position out of the wind.

Bill gave many examples of plants in the wild compared to their cultivated counterparts, some of which we are very familiar with. Snow in Summer, *Melaleuca linariifolia*, naturally occurs from south eastern Queensland to south eastern New South Wales where it grows along water courses and streams. It is often used as a street tree, and can also be seen growing at Cranbourne Gardens where 144 trees were planted on the Melaleuca Spits.

The natural range of the red bottlebrush *Callistemon viminalis* is along the east coast from northern Queensland down to Sydney, and is usually found growing along streams. It has adapted well to cultivation and is often grown as a street tree here in Melbourne, where it can sometimes form a quite dense screening shrub. Bill said that Manningham City Council had done a survey and found that there were 1030 specimens planted in the council area.

*Grevillea tenuiloba* is an attractive low-growing spreading shrub with dark yellow to orange toothbrush flowers, and occurs naturally in southwestern WA. It is now a rare plant in the wild due to habitat destruction, and while it prefers the dry climate of its natural range, it does well in the wetter eastern parts of the country when grafted onto hardy rootstock. Deb McMillan, one of our members has a spectacular grafted standard specimen in her garden and says it flowers through winter when not much else is in flower, also flowers over a long period of at least six months.

*Hakea francisiana* from Western Australia is quite widespread and also occurs in South Australia. Bill has spotted it being used as a street tree in Alphington, and when in flower is a clear favourite of the Rainbow Lorikeets.

*Buckinghamia celsissima*, from north Queensland, grows in forested areas and up there can get to 30 m where it is a fairly slender tree. It is cultivated in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane but it doesn't get anywhere near as tall as it does in its natural habitat – only about 4 or 5 m. It flowers for about 4 to 5 months of the year, and seems to flower better down here than up in Cairns which is its natural habitat.

Another tree that does well in Melbourne and quite far from its natural range is the Native Frangipani, *Hymenosporum flavum*. It occurs naturally from northern Queensland to New South Wales as well as in New Guinea. Bill said it was hard to find photos of plants in the wild, but showed us a photo he found on the internet whose GPS coordinates placed it at Dalrymple Heights near Mackay in Queensland. It tends to be a tall, slender tree in the wild but when cultivated doesn't get quite as big.



**Neatly pruned *Hymenosporum flavum* as street trees in Melville St, Brunswick**

(Screenshot from Google maps: Janet Hodgkiss)

Bill and Sue have seen specimens on Melville St in Brunswick where it is planted as a street tree. Here these specimens are pruned regularly to keep them from interfering with the power lines and cars on the road, and in fact have become interesting cube-shaped topiaries! The picture

above, a screenshot from Google Maps, shows a very similar view to Bill's photo which he showed us on the night.

Bill also highlighted the fact that some plants don't take so well to cultivation, or can be difficult to keep alive, such as the cushion plants from alpine areas in Tasmania, or *Lechenaultia* and some other species which may be quite short-lived. He also pointed out that while we may get some plants to grow and thrive, they sometimes might not look as good in the home garden as they do in the wild. An example of this were plants that occur en masse or in drifts in the bush, or in clumps along the edges of wetlands. He and Sue have however managed to achieve an attractive drift of *Xerochrysum viscosum* in their own garden, and clumps of the sedge *Chorizandra enodis* just need time to become established in their pond area.

I thoroughly enjoyed Bill's talk and I'm sure everyone else did too. It made us think a bit more about where our plants come from, and how they may behave or respond when planted outside their natural range. It's clear that knowing where a plant comes from certainly helps in their cultivation as we can provide the same or similar conditions in which they evolved, thus ensuring their success.

Some plants however do not adapt well to a cultivated environment and that's most likely because providing some of the conditions they need are out of our control or difficult to provide – things such as a specific soil type, the right soil microbes, humidity or lack thereof, periods of cold or freezing, or even altitude and aspect. Others of course absolutely flourish when given any sort of extra care and attention, and this is why I think most of us become addicted to gardening – it's such a beautiful reward for taking care of and nurturing a living entity, and even more so if it's one that over its own generations now finds itself living far from its ancestral home!

**Janet Hodgkiss**

## An Exciting New Project!

The most exciting project in my garden currently is the renewal of a seriously large section of garden in the north-west corner. I had hoped to put off dealing with it until after the ANPSA Conference in September but it was just so unsightly and unruly that I decided to start the process of renewal.

Unfortunately, I don't have a good picture of how bad it looked. It is so hard to hang on to a picture where the garden scene is ugly. The one I have included here gives you some idea.



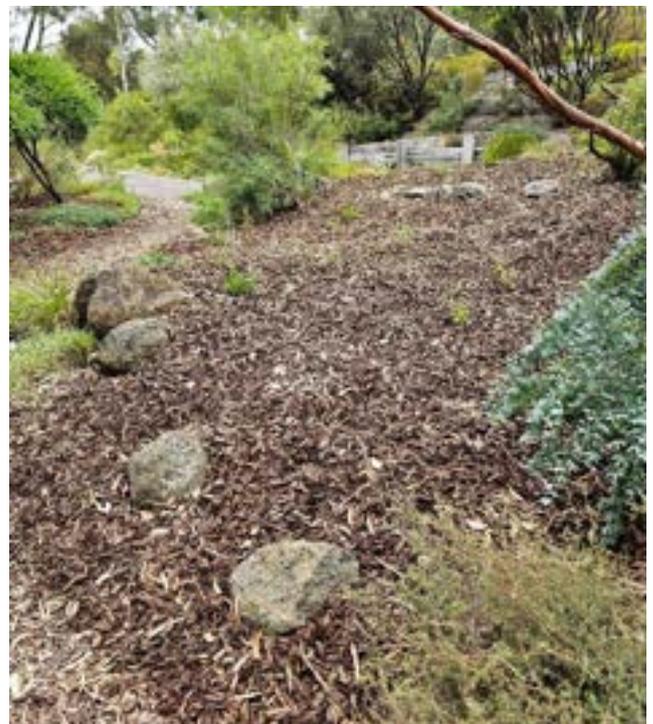
**Unruly and unsightly garden area**

(Photo: Chris Larkin)

The plants were big and climbing over each causing dead limbs, although no plant was actually dead. It was a mess. I had not seen the shape of the land since 2007. Only about six plants were removed – and it took days and days. It was like working on an excavation site. One grevillea was so tall I climbed it to saw off the top sections. Several bundles were taken to the top of the hill with a trailer, for Knox Council to remove, and a couple of trailer loads also went to the tip.

I have introduced a low stone wall just to hold soil and mulch. It's not the prettiest because I was making do with what I could find, but it should almost disappear with a bit of plant growth. I've just had some much better-looking rocks donated from a nearby garden which is an unexpected bonus. I have had three new seats constructed like the ones behind the house and they look great at the end of the path.

I now find the area has a natural swale helpful for slowing water and interestingly it gets dappled shade throughout most of the day thanks to mature trees nearby. When I feel the sting in the sun at the moment I'm really thankful for dappled shade and I believe the right plants will be happy too.



**New plants in the cleared area**

(Photo: Chris Larkin)

As you can see in the second picture, I have already started to put plants in the ground. This new area will be home to many more plants, possibly 20 to 25, which will provide a lot of visual interest and hopefully entice visitors to venture down into this area of the garden, take a seat and hopefully take the time to enjoy the surrounding garden.

**Chris Larkin**

## Out and About in Africa

I have arrived in Somerset West in the Cape, South Africa, and once again am struck by the spectacular mountains surrounding us. In this area *Corymbia maculata* are popular as street trees and seem so much larger than ours. There are many other eucalypts too, including Ironbarks.

The wedding I attended on the grounds of Vergelegen, one of the leading wineries in the Cape Region, was a great success. To get to the ceremony we had to walk on a very long path surrounded by two huge Lilly Pilly hedges. This was most impressive, and this was one of many of the formal gardens in this area using Lilly Pilly. Araucarias are very popular too but I'm not sure if they are Australian. I've seen several growing in smaller gardens.



**Tall Lilly Pilly hedges at Vergelegen**  
(Photo: Nicky Zanen)

This weekend I am visiting Fish Hoek on the Cape Peninsula for a couple of days, and here callistemons are flowering but so is *Corymbia ficifolia*. I find this odd because it is nearly April.



**Eucalypts are popular in South Africa as they do well in the dry climate** (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

My niece is vegan and for the first time in my life I've tasted Macadamia Milk. I was wondering how sustainable this crop can be, and apparently there are macadamia plantations in the northern Transvaal where the milk is produced. Along the freeway from Somerset West to the Airport are plantations of allocasuarina and eucalypt, presumably to provide timber for homes.



**Australian bottlebrush in the Western Cape, South Africa** (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

In some respects I am feeling very much at home with all these introduced trees.

**Nicky Zanen**

# APS FOOTHILLS INC.

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## Find us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/apsfoothills>

## Visit our Webpage:

<https://apsvic.org.au/aps-foothills/>

## MEETINGS

**Venue:** Knox Park Primary School, Kathryn Rd,  
Knoxfield. (Melway 73 C3)

**Date:** 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month (Feb-Nov)

**Time:** 7.45pm

## Newsletter Contributions

Please email contributions for the next  
newsletter to Kerry Davis by no later than:  
8pm Monday 6th May 2024.

Email: [foothillsnewsletter@apsvic.org.au](mailto:foothillsnewsletter@apsvic.org.au)

## COMMITTEE

**Leader:** Chris Larkin

**Secretary:** vacant

**Treasurer:** Deb McMillan

**Newsletter Editors:** Kerry Davis; Janet Hodgkiss

**Other Members:** Betty Wright; Janet Hodgkiss

**APS Vic Delegate:** Janet Hodgkiss

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*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the  
land on which we meet. We pay our respects to First  
Nations People throughout Australia  
and to Elders, past, present and emerging.*

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**VISITORS WELCOME!**

## Find us on Facebook and the Web

### Foothills

<https://www.facebook.com/apsfoothills>

### APS Victoria

<https://www.facebook.com/APSVic>



**Eremophila 'Peaches & Cream'**

(Photo: Kerry Davis)

APS Foothills Calendar 2024			
2024	Date		Topic
April	20 or 27	Saturday	Autumn Working Bee: Knox Park Primary School 10.00 am – 12 noon <i>(date to be confirmed)</i>
	24	Wednesday	Alex Stalder – Plants of the Victorian High Country
May	22	Wednesday	Member's Meeting – Five Slides
June	26	Wednesday	Jason Caruso – Small Eucalypts
July	24	Wednesday	AGM & Trivia
	27	Saturday	Winter Working Bee: Knox Park Primary School 10.00 am – 12 noon <i>(to be confirmed)</i>
August	28	Wednesday	Paul and Sue Birch – Dandenong Ranges <i>(speaker and topic to be confirmed)</i>
September	25	Wednesday	Deb McMillan – Garden Design <i>(topic to be confirmed)</i>
October	23	Wednesday	Jean Bellis – Geraldton to Perth
November	27	Wednesday	Chris Larkin – Melaleucas
December	7	Saturday	End of year get-together <i>(venue to be confirmed)</i>

# AUSTRALIAN PLANT SALE

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SAT 13<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024, 8:30<sup>AM</sup> – 4:00<sup>PM</sup>

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A large variety of native plants provided by specialist native nurseries for sale.

- Open garden
- Book sales
- BBQ & refreshments
- Kids activities

Adults  
\$2 each,  
Children  
free!

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Wirawilla, 40 Lovely Banks Rd, Lovely Banks

**AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY**  
— Geelong —

✉ [APSGEELONG@GMAIL.COM](mailto:APSGEELONG@GMAIL.COM)

🌐 [WWW.APSGEELONG.ORG](http://WWW.APSGEELONG.ORG)

## Shows, conferences, plant sales and other items of interest

13 April 2024 – APS Geelong Australian Native Plant Sale, 8.30 am to 4.00 pm. 'Wirrawilla', Lovely Banks.

20 April 2024 – APS Yarra Yarra Autumn plant sale. 10 am to 4 pm. Eltham Community and Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham. Plant stalls: Phillip Vaughan, SunValley, Nangak Tamboree nursery (indigenous), Goldfields Revegetation Nursery, Yarra Yarra Growers Stall. Tubestock to advanced plants, indigenous and grafted stock, books on related subjects. Easy parking and access. Refreshments available. For plat lists see: [apsyarrayarra.org.au/australian-plants-expo/autumn-plant-sale/](https://apsyarrayarra.org.au/australian-plants-expo/autumn-plant-sale/)

20 & 21 April 2024 – Yarra Valley Autumn Plant Fair & Garden Expo. 10 am to 5 pm. 125 Quayle Rd, Wandin. Phillip Vaughan will launch his new range of Native Perennials at the Expo.

27 April 2024 – APS Mornington Australian Native Plant Sale, Josephine's Lawn Area, The Briars, Nepean Highway, Mt Martha. 10 am to 3.30 pm. No dogs. Free talks on propagating plants, pruning and maintenance, book sales and kid's corner.

11 May 2024 – APS Victoria Committee of Management Meeting. Host: APS Mornington Peninsula at Fenton Square; visit to the Seaford Banksia Arboretum in the afternoon.

11 May 2024 – APS Melton Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale, at St Andrews Uniting Church, Bacchus Marsh, 9 am to 1 pm. For more details contact David Pye, Ph 0417 289 369.

27 and 28 July 2024 – APS Victoria Committee of Management Meeting. Host: APS Bendigo, including full weekend of activities.

5 September 2024 – Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar. Further details to follow.

7 September 2024 – APS Mitchell Expo and Plant Sale, Wallan Multipurpose Centre, Bentinck Street, Wallan.

14 & 15 September 2024 – APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo. 10 am to 4 pm. Eltham Community and Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham.

21 & 22 September 2024 – APS Grampians Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall.

21 & 22 September 2024 – Angair Wildflower Show & Art Show, Anglesea Memorial Hall, McMillan Street, Anglesea. 10 am to 4 pm. Wildflower display, indigenous plant sales, art show and painting sales.



30 September to 4 October, 2024 – ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference, The Round, Nunawading, Melbourne. Host: APS Victoria. Includes AJ Swaby address (3.30 pm 2 October) by Phillip Johnson: Chelsea Flower Show and Garden Design. For more information see: <https://www.anpsa2024conference.com/>

5 October 2024 – Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase. Details to follow.

19 & 20 October 2024 – Cranbourne Friends RBGV Spring Plant Sale. 10 am to 4 pm. Wide range of plants, plant list available one week before sale. Web: [rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au](https://rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au)

23 and 24 November 2024 – APS Victoria Committee of Management meeting and APS Victoria AGM. Host: APS Wangaratta. Dates to be confirmed.

2025 15<sup>th</sup> FJC Rogers Seminar 2025 on Epacridaceae hosted by APS Mornington Peninsula.

2026 ANPSA 2026 Biennial Conference, planned to be held in Alice Springs.