

Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society
Latrobe Valley Group Inc.
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Grevillea chrysophaea – Golden Grevillea

This Month

Event A visit to Mt St Gwinear to view alpine summer flowering.

Location Starting at Mt St Gwinear car park.

Date Saturday February 11

Time Meeting at the day visitor area car park at 11AM

With their cooler climate, the alpine areas come into flower later than the lowlands. With a bit of luck there will be plenty of activity for us to see. Travel to Erica/Rawson, then out the Thomson valley road. Take the turn to Mt St Gwinear Road, ending at the carpark. We aim to arrive there about 11AM with a bit of a look around the car park area before having BYO lunch. After lunch we will walk up towards the summit, people can choose how far they go as it is an out and back walk. There are toilets at the day visitor area.

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Your Editor and I were nearly caught napping as the end of January arrived early! Can't say the same for Mike whose contribution arrived in good time. To see 2022 out in style we celebrated with a visit to Col and Mary's garden. For those who were missing, the weather was perfect, and all agreed that the garden had never looked better. I managed a trip to Tasmania before Christmas to visit my sister who lives in Wynyard. For many years she has been active in the North West Tasmania Land Care Group, so you could say I had a 'Busman's Holiday' as we toured some of the regeneration sites targeted by the group. Backed by local councils who provide the indigenous plants required, the emphasis is on coastal areas. Some of the areas are steep and windswept and include Fossil Bluff, formed 275 million years ago. It is rich in fossils, including the remains of prehistoric whales and the oldest marsupial fossil found in Australia. We enjoyed balmy weather, but it wasn't difficult to imagine planting in Autumn buffeted by strong chilly winds and rain. As well as planting, many hours are also spent weeding, with Sea Spurge (photo at right) being one of the main problems. A member of the Euphorbia species, it is native to Europe, northern Africa and western Asia. Widely naturalised in Australia, it invades coastal areas, displacing local species and colonising open sand areas favoured by certain nesting birds. At home in her "spare" time my sister has created a native garden, replacing many of the more traditional Camellias and Rhododendrons which, as you will appreciate, is still a work in progress.



To start our programme for 2023, we will visit Mt St.Gwinear in the north east end of Baw Baw National Park. The walk can reveal magnificent views of the Thomson and Aberfeldy Rivers and into the Victorian Alps. There are several web sites with information, but my favourite mentioned seeing 'Wombat footprints in the snow'. We probably won't see those but should still enjoy 'Dreamy strolls via stands of snow gums'. With that offering (and the photo below to tempt you), we hope to see you there on February 11th, meeting at the Mount St. Gwinear day visitor area at 11 o'clock where we will have lunch, followed by a walk. During lunch we will discuss plans for the next few meetings.



Well, has the Big Dry hit your garden yet? After the water we had in the second half of 2022, it was a shock to have it suddenly cut off. Especially as I had planted about 35 new plants in the new year. It has taken a lot of water management but it looks like they will pull through if I can keep up the care. Most of the rest of the garden is starting to suffer,



although the Kangaroo Paw/Daisy patch is still a riot of colour, even if it is starting to fade a bit. My three plants of *Malva priessiana* are a big showpiece here as usual, each being covered with those large, pink blooms. Out the front, *Persoonia pinifolia* is happily flowering in the shade. It is a tall, rather straggly shrub that will one day be a great feature just off the edge of my 'yet to be built' deck over the water tank.



A small plant that doesn't get much mention in my garden is *Psoralea adscendens*. This little gem is a low trailing plant to about half a metre high at best and will cover about a metre in the growing season when it is dotted with groups of tiny pink pea flowers. Mine is planted just



under some rock steps and tends to take over the step at this time of year. Once the flowers die off leaving the stems, I just hack it back to its base for the process to start again in the new season. I grew this plant from seed provided by the APS seed bank in about 2003 and it has been in the ground ever since then with no more care than what I have just described. A truly tough little individual!



Mary found these two little critturs on a potted *Hibbertia pedunculata*. It's part of a bird bath arrangement I had built for our granddaughter and is waiting to be delivered. The bird bath is (as usual) made from scrap materials of some historical significance and, once in final position, the Hibbertia is to be planted in the base, eventually flowing over the concrete pipe section. These two caterpillars were working their way through the foliage so Mary relocated them to a large patch of Hibbertia behind the house where they can eat to their heart's content and turn into whatever lovely flying things that they are destined to become.

Remember in the December newsletter issue I invited comment on the layout and content of the newsletter? I have had no response so far so would like to raise it for discussion at the next meeting. Hope to see you at Mt St Gwinear in February.

Species: *Pterostylis pedunculata*.

Family: Orchidaceae.

Derivation:

Pterostylis: From Greek, *pteron*, meaning "wing", and *stylos*, meaning "pillar, pole or column" and referring to the broad wings found on the upper part of the column in this genus of orchids.

pedunculata: From Latin, *pedunculus*, meaning "a little foot", with the suffix *-atus*, designating the possession of something and referring to the characteristic of this species in having a flower stalk.

Common Name: Maroonhood.

Distribution: The south-eastern corner of the continent, from the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia to Fraser Island in Queensland, including Kangaroo, King, Flinders and Lord Howe Islands and Tasmania, and as far inland as the ACT and the Warby Ranges in north-east Victoria.

Description: Arising from an underground tuberoid, a ground-hugging basal rosette forms, consisting of 2-6 ovate to oblong leaves, up to 7cm long and 2cm wide with entire, flat or crinkled margins. A single stem up to 25cm tall can arise from the centre of the rosette, bearing a single flower. The flower consists of 6 highly modified tepals (3 sepals and 3 petals) arranged around a central column comprised of the reproductive parts of the flower. The dorsal sepal and 2 petals are fused into an open-faced 'hood' shape, while the 2 lateral sepals are fused for enough of their length to cover the open face of the hood and for their free points to form 'horns' over the hood. The third petal is called the labellum, is very sensitive to touch and sits inside the hood where its tip is only just visible through the opening in the hood. When a potential pollinating insect enters the hood, the labellum is triggered to trap the insect inside the flower and force it to exit the flower via a route past the column that will assist pollination of the flower. Ingenious!

Opinion: Orchids are great little plants, but keep in mind that they are all protected in the wild, some are very sensitive to disturbance and hence, are vulnerable/threatened/endangered. Never collect plants from wild populations and take care if you are undertaking activities around their habitats. My plants are obtained from reputable and legal sources (yes, I know that they all originated from plants collected from the bush back when that was the norm and before we knew better, but now we do know better, so don't be part of the problem!) with the aim of taking the pressure off the wild populations and hopefully increasing their numbers in cultivation. ►



The Maroonhood is one of the easier orchids to grow and maintain in a garden and I keep mine in a hanging basket, to provide excellent drainage and prevent the soil from staying too damp, which will cause the tubers to rot, particularly in the hot weather when the tubers are dormant. Hanging also keeps the pots off the ground and away from a lot of the pests and bugs which live in our gardens but are not so prevalent out in the wild. It's amazing how much damage a single slug or snail can do to your greenhoods in a very short time! But as you can see from the photo, it doesn't keep them all at bay, 'tis a leafhopper nymph I think!

Sources: Backhouse – Bush Beauties, The Wild Orchids of Victoria, Australia.
Online – Google, AVH: The Australasian Virtual Herbarium, VicFlora: Flora of Victoria.



And the rains fell in Boolarra ...

By Mike Beamish

Starting with rainfall, our total for the year was 1107.5mm, falling on 185 days, which was about 10mm more than the previous year (1098mm over 200 days) and about 170mm more than our 30-year average. Our wettest day was August 14 with 56mm falling between midnights. November 20 was next best with 37mm. Our wettest week was the second week of June when over 110mm fell evenly over 8 consecutive days. Our wettest month was November, it rained on 25 days out of 30 for a total of 168mm. Our driest month was February, only 5.5mm on 7 days, so basically none that was effective. As for averages, January, March, October and December were slightly higher, April, May, July and September were slightly lower, February was much lower and June, August and November were much higher. Over 30 years, October remains our wettest month on average, but only marginally more than August and September.

Our hottest day in 2022 came right at the beginning, New Year's Day, January 1, 37°C. Our coldest day was June 6 at 8°C. Our warmest night, 20°C, occurred four times on January 2 & 27 and March 2 & 4. Our coldest night was 0°C only twice on July 30 and August 10. Keep in mind that my outdoor thermometer was hanging in the tree at the top of my driveway (it's now been replaced by a new one on my front veranda) and the surrounding garden could influence the readings, perhaps a couple of degrees cooler on hot days and warmer on cool nights than out on the road 20m away. I know we didn't have a frost in the garden last winter, but any cars on the street overnight were iced over several times.

I haven't set up year by year averages for temperatures on my spreadsheet, but I do calculate the monthly averages that I can then compare with previous years. So for January to May, both day and night, it was hotter in 2022 than in 2021, sometimes up to two degrees. Then the cloudy winter and spring set in and the average temperatures were lower in 2022 than in 2021, except for slightly higher overnight minimums in October and December. So that's probably why the plants in the garden and out in the local bush seemed to be slow to get under way over the last couple of months, despite the ample rainfall..

Summer on Mt Baw Baw

By Col Jackson

In January, Mary and I had the opportunity to tag along with the Victorian group of the Australian Native Orchid Society on a trip to Mt Baw Baw. We left Latrobe Valley sweltering in 34-degree heat and arrived at the ski lodge to a much more civilised 24 degrees. On the morning of day two we were clouded in (or is it called 'fog' if the cloud is touching the ground?) Some of the crew decided to travel around to Mt St Gwinear to search for orchids, while we stayed with the group that opted to walk on the tracks around the top of Mt Baw Baw. After a very short time it was raining through the fog/cloud and raincoats and umbrellas were essential equipment. Mary and I went all the way to the peak and although visibility was limited to about 30 metres, the rain and fog showed the bush in a very pleasant light.

Day three was cold, starting at about 1 degree, but with clear patches. We walked to the peak again, this time taking lots of photos with no rain to upset the cameras. Below is a selection of what nature provided. ►





Our Xanthorrhoeas

By Wendy and Peter Cox

We keep getting asked what the secret is to growing and flowering Xanthorrhoeas. The answer is always the same; buy them, plant them, leave them alone and hope for the best. The only time we prepared an area to plant our “Christmas Tree” Xanthorrhoea, a beautiful two-headed specimen, did not end well. We dug over the area adding sand and gravel into a slight mound then planted it. Six months later it was dead!

The four in the back yard thrive and most years we have multiple flower spikes. We must have fluked the perfect area. Of the three in the front yard, one was planted about 30 years ago as a seedling (it has yet to flower) and yes, we did try burning it. The other two put up a spike when they feel like it, which is not often.

We don't feed or water them, we just sit back and admire.





Coming events of interest

Note: Please check the Vic APS website for cancellations before attending.,

25 & 26 March 2023 - Cranbourne Friends RBGV Autumn Plant Sale. 10 am to 4 pm. Wide range of plants, plant list available one week before sale. Free entry. Website: rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

29 March to 2 April 2023 – Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS), Carlton Gardens and Royal Exhibition Building. Website: <https://melbflowershow.com.au>.

1 April 2023 – APS Geelong **Australian Native Plant Sale**, 'Wirrawilla', Lovely Banks. 8.30 am to 4.00 pm.

15 April 2023 – APS Heathcote Plant and Flower Show. Mechanics Institute, 121 High Street, Heathcote.

22 April 2023 - APS Yarra Yarra Autumn Plant Sale, Eltham Community & Reception Centre, Eltham. 10 am – 4 pm.

29 April 2023 - APS Mornington Peninsula Plant Sale. 10 am to 3 pm. The Briars, Mt Martha.

13 May 2023 – APS Melton and Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale. 9am to 1pm. The venue is expected to be St Andrews Uniting Church at Bacchus Marsh, to be confirmed

24 & 25 June 2023 – APS Ballarat Winter Flower Show. Flower show, plant sales etc. Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Gilles Street, Ballarat. 10 am – 4 pm.

2 September 2023 – APS Cardinia Region Group Plant Sale at Acoonah Park, Princes Hwy, Berwick, from 9 am to 3 pm. To be located in the undercover fruit and vegetable market area.

9 & 10 September 2023 – APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo. Eltham Community & Reception Centre, 801 Main Road Eltham. 10.00 am - 4.00 pm both days.

16 & 17 September 2023 – 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.

23 & 24 September 2023 – APS Bendigo Flower Show, Victory College, Kairn Road, Strathdale (Bendigo).

23 & 24 September 2023 – APS Grampians host APS Vic September COMM. To be confirmed.

30 September & 1 October 2023 – APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall.

7 October 2023 – APS Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase, Echuca Masonic Lodge Hall, 426 High Street, Echuca. 9 am to 4 pm. Flower show, native plant sales, basket weaving display, floral art and painting sales.

14 October 2023 – APS Mitchell Plant Expo and Sale. Wallan Community Centre, Bentinck Street, Wallan. From 9 am to 3 pm.

21 & 22 October 2023 - APS Ballarat Spring Flower Show. Flower show, plant sales etc. Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Gilles Street, Ballarat. 10 am – 4 pm. (to be confirmed)

30 September to 4 October, 2024 – ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference hosted by APS Victoria in Melbourne.

2023 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar

Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
Feb	Sat	11	Trip to Mt St Gwinear for the summer alpine flowering	11 AM
Mar	Thu	23	A slide show and talk on Western Australia's Mt Augustus and Dragon Tree Soak by Marilyn Bull.	TBC

Rainfall for 2022 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	67	30	81	94	60	170	90	198	60	172	193	89	1302
Brian	Drouin (east)	74	11	76	86	75	145	77	199	66	199	183	95	1286
Warren	Yarragon	107	5	55	68	58	191	97	163	64	144	196	107	1253
Wayne	Tanjil South	83	15	63	98	107	130	74	161	96	203	237		1267
Peter	Mirboo North	62	8	67	68	50	150	88	189	73	136	157	66	1113
Judy	Moe South	73	13	64	55	93	209	72	165	67	128	236	89	1264
Mike	Boolarra	72	6	74	60	54	162	69	166	66	119	168	94	1108
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	68	11	85	75	46	164	72	161	62	133	171	85	1131
John	Traralgon South	88	10	31	56	28	175	50	136	49	126	146	54	949

Rainfall for 2023 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)													0
Brian	Drouin (east)													0
Warren	Yarragon													0
Wayne	Tanjil South													0
Peter	Mirboo North													0
Judy	Moe South													0
Mike	Boolarra													0
Mary	Jeeralang Junction													0
John	Traralgon South													0

<https://apsvic.org.au/aps-latrobe-valley/>

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Golden Grevillea
Grevillea chrysophaea

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Title page photo: *Grevillea chrysophaea* at Holey Plains State Park by Mike Beamish