

Golden

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

This Month

Event A slide show and talk on Western Australia's Mt Augustus and Dragon Tree Soak by Marilyn Bull

Location Morwell Bowling Club – 52 Hazelwood Rd. Morwell

Date Thursday March 23

Time 12 Noon lunch (optional) – 2 PM talk start.

Marilyn Bull has had a long-term interest in Australian native plants that has included work at Karwarra Gardens in the Dandenongs and helping put together the book *Flora of Melbourne*. She has travelled extensively through outback Australia and has offered to give us this slide show and talk on Mt Augustus and also the Dragon Tree Soak in northern Western Australia. There is the option of a meal off the menu at the Bowling Club before the talk.

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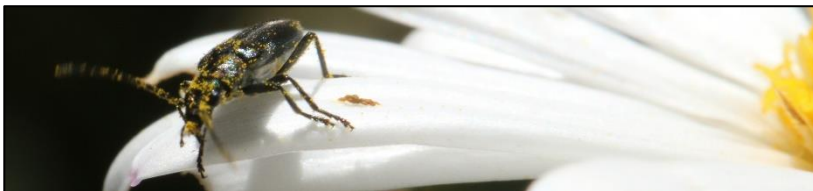
For our trip to Mt St. Gwinear the weather was perfect. We decided to start with the short (45 mins) round trip to a lookout but found that time had overtaken the description on the sign with the rampant growth obscuring the view. Back for lunch and a catch up as it was our first meet for the year. Then for the serious summit walk which has steep sections. Only Col and Pete made it to the top and some of Col's photos are attached showing some insects making use of the flowering plants. The visitors centre car park has been very well developed as the mountain is a popular, family friendly winter destination for toboggan runs, cross-country trails and a snow play area. In summer, excellent toilet facilities are still available.

I spent last weekend in the Dandenongs. Apart from celebrating my granddaughter's wedding, it was a nostalgia trip for me as I lived in Olinda years ago, tending many Rhododendrons and Azaleas in an Edna Walling designed garden. I mention this as I'm sure you know she was an important influence on Australian gardening, steering tastes away from Anglo-centric heritage planting towards using native plants. My garden was a typical example of this, with towering *Eucalyptus Regnans* (Mountain Ash) surrounding it, providing homes for wildlife and many evenings spent watching possums and gliders among the high branches. The mighty trees are still there although, since 1997-2011 up to 50% have disappeared due to clearing and bushfires.

The Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show is back to full strength this year, with Kuranga Nursery again combining with APS Victoria to showcase our flora with a stunning display. APS will be well represented for the 5 days with members on hand to help with information on gardening with natives. You can see it from 29th March to 2nd April at the Royal Exhibition building, 9 to 5 daily.

We are proposing a propagating session in the afternoon prior to the pot-luck dinner and 'Mothing Evening' in April (early details below). We'll canvass expressions of interest for this and other ideas for meetings at the bowls club on the 23rd.

Finally, on 27th February, our deputy leader, Jan Workman flew out on an adventure to Antarctica. You'll remember she shared details of her trip to W.A. last year. We look forward to hearing about her latest trip. .



The feedback I have received says that the newsletter is ok as it is. All I require, then, is for the steady trickle of articles to continue. Mike as always is a mainstay with his 'Plants in my garden' series (now at 195 so far, a mighty effort). This not only gives us some hard facts about his plants but also lightens it all up with his 'Opinion' section where his local experiences are often discussed in a humorous way. There are also his articles on the many interests and activities that he and Cathy are involved in, and in this month's edition we have 'Mt Baw Baw Non-Orchids (aka Critters)', an article on some interesting moths found while staying at the Edski Lodge in January.

In addition, this month Daryl has contributed 'Plants that have died in my garden', a wry twist on Mike's articles, but one I am sure we all feel from time to time as we try to grow Australian plants from different climates in our own gardens, often with only temporary success. So, please, give some thought to contributing an article, short or long, deep or light, on your plants, experiences, problems, whatever! I will accept them via letter, email, text, even brown paper bag, especially if they include a photo or two.

The rainfall statistics are in for last year and it's no surprise that it showed it was a wet year. There was slightly greater rainfall at the west end and north side of Latrobe Valley. Those of us to the south and east got a little less and, as usual, Traralgon South got the least of all. January rainfall was pitiful, mostly in the low 20's with the exception of Yarragon and Moe South. Warren said most of that was due to one thunderstorm.

Because of the lack of rain, the garden is rather dull overall. With that said, there are bright spots when you look for them. Our beautiful orange flowering gums are about halfway through and attracting these colourful butterflies now.



Perhaps they are the adult form of last month's featured caterpillars? Almost all the Kangaroo Paws have faded away except for these two. Both are planted adjacent to rocks and must have access to a cooler, moister root zone to be still producing new buds like this. Otherwise, flowers are few and sporadic, but beautiful where they appear.



Species: *Scaevola porocarya*.

Family: Goodeniaceae.

Derivation:

Scaevola: A Roman surname, from Caius Mucius Scaevola (507BC), who attempted to assassinate Porsena and, on being apprehended, burnt off his own right hand. It is derived from the Latin *scaevus*, meaning left or left-handed, and refers either to the resemblance of the dried flowers to a withered hand or the one-sided fan-shaped corolla of some species. Pronounced SEE-vo-la, but invariably altered to SKE-vo-la or SKAY-vo-la in Australia.

porocarya: From Greek, *poros*, meaning a passage or pore, and *caryon*, meaning nut, referring to the cavity in the endocarp (a woody layer surrounding a seed in a fleshy fruit) of this species.



Common Name: Striate-fruit Scaevola.

Distribution: Endemic to Western Australia, where it grows in sandy, clay soils on the Geraldton sandplain, occurring north from Geraldton to the area around Kalbarri. ►



Description: A dwarf to small, spreading to ascending shrub to 2m tall and broad, often with weak, straggly and entangled stems. Green leaves are up to 12cm long and 2cm wide, linear to oblanceolate with recurved margins. White to blue fan-shaped flowers with a cream throat appear in winter and spring and can be up to 3.5cm wide, followed by grooved fruits to 15mm by 10mm in size.

Opinion: This is another plant that was, but no longer is, in my garden! The photos were taken in September 2020, of the first flowers to appear on this plant. Unfortunately, a few weeks later there was a hot, dry spell while we were away, the plants didn't get watered in time, and a few didn't cope. It didn't help that this one was in a hanging basket, dangling from my pergola in the backyard, in full sun and sheltered from any cooling breezes, so that it readily cooked in a series of out-of-the-blue 30°C days. The plant hadn't been there long enough to achieve any great size, so I didn't get the chance to try for cuttings. I chose a hanging basket because of the natural habitat of the species, deep sand in a semi-arid landscape, not expecting it to like the heavy, wet soils of Boolarra, but it might have had more of a chance if I had planted it in the ground. If I'm ever able to source another specimen, I'll hedge my bets, take some cuttings and plant them in a variety of positions in the hope that at least one will settle in for the duration.

Sources: Sharr – WA Plant Names & their Meanings.
 Elliot & Jones – Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 8.
 Online – FloraBase: The WA Flora, Google.

2023 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar				
Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
Mar	Thu	23	A slide show and talk on Western Australia's Mt Augustus and Dragon Tree Soak by Marilyn Bull at Morwell Bowling Club. Optional meal before the slide show and talk.	2 PM 12 Noon
April	To be discussed but may be chosen closer to the time for suitable weather.		Practical 'hands-on' activity on propagation by division. Pot luck meal (everyone bring a dish – soup, salad, main or desert). Nothing evening (attracting, observing, photographing, identifying the local moths).	Mid afternoon through evening
May	TBD	TBD	Austplant Nursery and Gardens visit.	
June	TBD	TBD	Mint Bushes by Miriam Ford	
Aug – Annual General Meeting				
Oct – Possible trip to Blackwood/Wombat State Forest/Melton Botanic Gardens.				
Jan or Feb 2024 – Possible trip to Edski Lodge at Mt Baw Baw – to be discussed.				

Plants that have died in my garden.

By Daryl Radnall

Our extremely wet winter and spring have caused the demise of quite a number of plants in our garden, some of which have been growing for many years. My 'crop circle' bed had water pooling for weeks around the plants so I guess I should not be surprised with the result, despite the mounding of the garden beds. Below is the list of deceased:

- ***Prostanthera ovalifolia*, Variegated Mint-bush.** This was the first plant raffle prize that I won at our APS meetings and had been going great guns until it got wet feet.
- ***Telopia speciosissima*. NSW Waratah** which had also been going great but seemed to die overnight.
- ***Olearia tomentosa* 'Mauve Magic'**. This one turned up its toes very quickly and was the first to go.
- ***Banksia preamorsa*, wine red form.** Still fairly young, it had only been in the ground 2-3 years.
- ***Acacia aphylla*, Leafless rock wattle.** These tend to be a 'drop-dead plant', so its dying is no big surprise.
- ***Eucalyptus lehmannii*, Bushy yate.** Rescued from a sick bin on our first APS visit to Mitch and Cath's Woolenook Nursery in Maffra, I think. At least it had a few years of extended life and did flower for the first time last year.
- ***Xanthorrhoea quadrangulata*, Yacca, Grass tree.** A South Australian from the rocky parts of the Flinders which had looked healthy for 6-7 years or more. The only grass tree I ever got to grow.
- ***Hakea bucculenta*, Red pokers.** I'll have to get another one of these as it looked spectacular when in flower.

I'm trying to convince myself to look on the bright side and see all this death as space for more plantings, but I am failing. Losing new plantings, I can almost accept as it is probably due to my planting method of dig a hole, shove it in, an initial water and maybe fertilise, wish it the best of luck, then ignore; but when established plants go I crack the sads!

[I am sure all gardeners feel like this at some stage. Sometimes it is a gradual process that occurs over a long time, other times because of a local event (flood, drought). I know I have killed many more plants in my garden than I have alive today. Nowadays, I 'crack the sads' when I have tried a particular species in several parts of the garden only to have them all die regardless. Editor.]



Mt Baw Baw Non -Orchids (aka Critters)

By Mike Beamish

When orchids aren't stealing our attention, we keep our eyes peeled for any other interesting flowers or creatures that we may stumble across. We didn't think our three-night stay on Mt Baw Baw would provide enough orchids to keep us going for all our waking hours, so we came prepared with an alternative: a mothing sheet/light trap; something to do after hours when the orchid discussions were done and dusted.

As it turned out, the sheet didn't get much of a run. We set it up the first night and ran it for a little while, but with lightning flickering around the clouds and thunder rolling around the mountains, we were soon forced to pack up and run for cover. There was also a lot of light pollution throughout the village in competition with ours, so we did just as well by leaving the lodge curtains open and checking for moths attracted to the windows. The rest of the stay presented us with cold, wet and foggy conditions, not greatly conducive to insect activity, but even so we tracked down some critters to get our cameras in action.

Our first walk of the trip was on the first afternoon, when the weather was still warm and sunny enough for the March Flies to be buzzing around our ankles. Lots of other insects were active too, in particular little brown moths with yellow stripes. They were difficult to get close enough to for decent photos, but we managed to snap a couple. I often wonder whether quick-set hairspray would be a useful tool in getting the little blighters to sit still! These little moths turned out to be Medium Radiating Carpets, *Chrysolarentia stereozona*, one of three similar species that fly during the day in sub-alpine habitats, feeding on wildflowers, in this case Dusty Daisy-bush *Olearia phlogopappa* subsp. *flavescens*. They are about 2cm across.



Meanwhile, other members of the party had been undertaking their own expeditions around the village and had noticed a couple of large moths in the entranceway to the Visitor's Centre next to the main car park. These turned out to be a male Helena Gum-moth (related to the Emperor Gum-moth) *Opodiphthera helena*, about 12cm wingspan and a moth in the genus *Endoxyla*, sometimes called Goat Moths, that hasn't yet been identified to species level on iNaturalist. This one was about 7cm long. ►



The moths that came to the sheet and to the lodge windows over three nights were quite varied. Perhaps the most common were the Bogong Moths *Agrotis infusa*, good news for the alpine creatures that rely on them given the alarming fall in numbers over the last couple of years. These moths come in a range of colour forms from really dark, almost black, to a light brown, though they all have the same basic pattern on their wings. Here's a couple of examples, a light male and a darker female, can you see the difference? These are about 3cm long.



Almost as common were the Pome Loopers *Pasiphilodes testulata* which also appear in a range of colour forms, some with pale cream patches, but always a similar underlying pattern. Here's the most common form, less than 20mm wide. Next to it is a pale green Stitched Delicate *Poecilasthena balioloma*, a little bigger at 25mm wingspan. ►



A much more vivid green was an unnamed Emerald given the provisional name of (*Prasinocyma*) sp.(1), about 40mm across the shoulders. Perhaps one day the researchers will be given enough support to officially describe and place this beauty. The last of the moths I'll show you from the sheet/windows doesn't have a common name, but is one of the Leafroller moths (that is, their larvae usually live in rolled up leaves) with the moniker *Sobriana ophiodesma*. This one's only about 10mm long.



On the second day of the trip, the weather was basically cold, wet and horrible, with no real expectation of improvement and no chance of seeing the alpine Sun Orchids we had all hoped to see in all their glory. So a few of us decided to take a 50km road trip (one way) around to the other side of the plateau, about 8km from Baw Baw Village as the crow flies. It was a good decision, it was still cold and windy on the St Gwinear side, but only sporadic drizzle rather than constant rain, and even a few sunny breaks. The best thing though (along with some nice orchids) was a couple of really pretty moths. The first was an Ornate Carpet *Chrysolarentia perornata* that kindly let me get close enough and sat still long enough for me to get a reasonable shot. It has a wingspan of about 4cm when spread out, but is probably about 25mm wide in the photo. The second was a tiny Curved-horn Moth (family name, for the long, curved palps out the front) no more than 10mm long, that was surprisingly (for a colourful moth) unidentified on iNaturalist. By pure fluke, browsing through a couple of moth books, I saw a photo from the Otways that looked a bit, but not a lot, similar. The particular species name was not in the iNaturalist database, but Mr Google found a couple of photos, one on a Lepidoptera enthusiast's website from Queensland and the other on the CSIRO's moth database. Imagine my surprise when it was a dead ringer for my moth! I then presented all this information to the iNaturalist curation team, the moth was added to the database and there are now half a dozen records of this moth, now with the name *Poliorhabda auriceps(a)*, all from the Baw Baw area. Maybe citizen science does work!



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.

29-30 April 2023 – Friends of Royal Botanic Gardens plant sale 10am to 4pm Sat, 10am to 3pm Sun. Southern gate (Gate E) RBG Melbourne.

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.

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	138	127	1295
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)	21												21
Brian	Drouin (east)	22												22
Warren	Yarragon	49												49
Wayne	Tanjil South	25												25
Peter	Mirboo North	35												35
Judy	Moe South													0
Mike	Boolarra	20												20
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	24												24
John	Traralgon South													0

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

Leader:	Jill Fidler	0407871603	jillsgarden71@gmail.com
Deputy-leader:	Jan Workman	0429029279	jantw@y7mail.com
Secretary:	Cathy Beamish	0447452755	cathy.beamish@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Mike Beamish	0447452755	mcandcjb@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor:	Col Jackson	0429095527	coljackson57@hotmail.com
Website:	John Stephens	0439755013	john.stephens9@bigpond.com
Librarian:	Pamela Cox	0429194733	theroseglen@yahoo.com.au
Publicity	Delma Hodges	0408398385	rj3dh2@aussiebb.com.au



Golden Grevillea
Grevillea chrysophaea

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