

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 Mint Bushes by Miriam Ford.
Location Morwell Bowling Club – 52 Hazelwood Rd. Morwell.
Date Thursday 8th June.
Time 2 pm. (Optional meal off the menu at 12 noon).

Miriam Ford is the current APS Victoria president who has kindly offered to give us a talk and slide show on Mint Bushes. These aromatic and colourful shrubs should have a place in all our gardens so come along and be inspired. As usual with our meetings at the Morwell Bowling Club, there is the option of a meal from the menu at 12 noon before getting down to the meeting.

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I did make it to the National Arboretum on my recent visit to Canberra. It was my 4th visit and coincided with the 10th Anniversary of the official opening. The concept of establishing an Arboretum of 100 Forests, dates back to the bushfires of 2001-03, when large areas of pine forests were burned leaving an area of 250 hectares available. Planning started and 3 pre-existing plantations dating from 1917-1930, which survived the fires, were incorporated. These are now part of the network of trails throughout the park and easy to find. As mature forests, they give a real feel for the future. The central Visitor Centre is home to the National Bonsai Collection and the real focus of my visit. Many of our members will

have visited and will share my enthusiasm for this exhibit. It features about 74 specimens on display at any one time. Some owned by the authority, some on loan and some being rested, with the Native examples my particular favourites. Banksias are the standout with full size cones on miniaturised trees. I was disappointed to find that the Acacia I saw on my last visit had died. The normal life cycle of trees continues during the Bonsai process and this particular one was no different. The oldest tree in the collection dates



from 1880 and the youngest only 18 years old. The current trees being promoted by the Growing Friends are Wollemi Pines that are now propagated from local seed and available to order with many on display in pots. Some time ago I wrote about the superb examples growing in Mathison Park, Churchill. We had a meeting there last year and visited then. I have seen them growing in various situations including pride of place, exposed in a Ballarat garden, which would have been very far from the protected conditions where they were originally found.

Now for my Odd Spot...There is a 'Very Small Chance' that the Tasmanian Tiger, whose last known living example died in a Hobart Zoo in 1936, has survived in remote areas of South West Tasmania. I found a newspaper article recently which quotes analysis by environmental sustainability Professor Barry Brook, of only the highest quality sightings, which states the median estimate for extinction in the late 1980's or 1990's. I'll bring the article along in June and you can read it.

Hope to see you at the Morwell Bowling Club on June 8th.



Last month I was anticipating that I would be away on a desert trip until early June. However, a check on conditions revealed that the Eyre Creek is still in flood, flowing out into the swales between six adjacent sand dunes. We will look at conditions again in July, but we all suspect it will still be too wet and the trip may be cancelled for this year. That does give me a chance to tackle some garden maintenance and new planting. I have a lot of plants that I have propagated and purchased, and while I always aim for Autumn, I inevitably seem to end up planting in Winter. It is always difficult though, trying to match available positions with the plants on hand. After some hours spent wandering and pondering, I decided that I needed to do some major surgery before starting. A small gum tree at the rear of the house was leaning and threatening to fall and would certainly reach the house if it did. In addition, it had a dead strip on one side indicating the possibility of rot. Down it came with the minimum of damage to the rest of the garden, and yes, there was rot in the trunk. I really loved the look of this tree so I've planted a new mallee gum (*E. leptophylla*) beside the stump with the wishful thinking that it will grow in the mudstone.



Another problem was the grey gum just outside the garden area behind the house. A large limb overhung the remains of one of my wood stacks, a stack that will be completely used up this winter. I would like to expand the garden into this area once the wood is gone. Removing the large limb was a challenge, achieved by using a bow and arrow to shoot a line over the

smaller parts of the limb, pulling up a wire rope, then using a hand winch to break those smaller parts off. Once all the leafy stuff was pulled down, I was able to drop the main limb without causing harm to the garden or the wood shelter. This tree too has rot in the trunk and would reach the house if it fell that way. Removing this limb will change the balance of the tree, allowing it to be pulled away from the house if (read 'when') needed in the future.

Not all is destruction in the garden. Just the other day we noticed that the Gymea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsor*) was putting up a new flower spike. David Grant gave me this plant in the late 90's and it has only flowered



once, possibly about eight or ten years ago. Maybe we will get the Gymea Lily and the Spear Lily flowering at the same time! And this Crowea is doing just fine. I managed to rescue a viable cutting as its parent was dying a couple of years ago. Success!



Species: *Zieria prostrata*.

Family: Rutaceae.

Derivation:

Zieria: Named after Johannis Zier, an 18th-century Polish botanist.

prostrata: A Latin word meaning "thrown to the ground, prostrate or lying along the ground", pretty self-explanatory.

Common Name: None.

Distribution: Restricted to very small areas of low coastal heathland, around Coffs Harbour on the NSW north coast.

Description: A dwarf, spreading, compact shrub to 40cm tall and a spread of up to 1m. Leaves are trifoliolate (divided into 3 leaflets), dark green and glossy, and strongly aromatic. The leaflets are obovate, up to 15mm long x 6mm wide, smooth and glandular with entire margins and a rounded apex. Flowers have 4 white to pale pink petals in axillary cymes holding up to 7 flowers, and are about 5mm across.

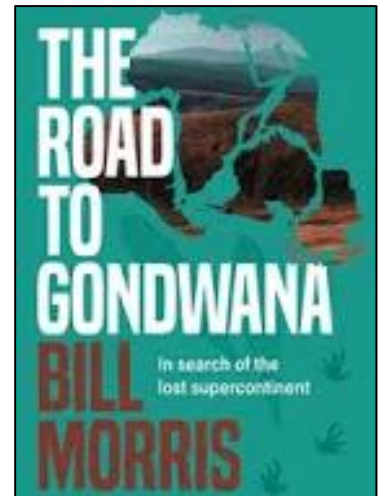


Opinion: My plant is now a couple of decades old and is not what I'd call prostrate. It is about 50cm tall, though it's hard to tell exactly as it's growing on the mound in the front yard around my frog pond. I'd call it rocket-shaped, as its main stem is vertically straight with its branches and foliage cascading downwards in a skirt around its base. I can see though, how it could be called prostrate if the branches then continued out along the ground around it, but mine doesn't, possibly because it's slightly overhanging the adjacent pathway and I don't want it to cover the path. Not that I recall ever pruning it, but I might have done over the years to prevent it blocking the path, just like all the shrubbery further along the path that is in dire need of a slash and burn (or a mulch is more likely).

Sources: Elliot & Jones - Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 9.
Sharr - WA Plant Names and their Meanings.
Online - PlantNET: Flora of NSW Online.

The Road to Gondwana. In search of the lost supercontinent by Bill Morris.

Such a title is always going to grab my attention – I am fascinated by the concept of Gondwana and all its implications for modern-day Australia, New Zealand and South America. So it appears is Bill Morris, 'writer, documentary filmmaker and musician' from New Zealand. (I am writing this in the assumption that anyone reading this will be familiar with the concept of the great southern land mass which existed for half a billion years until it started to break up about 150 million years ago.) The book follows, very readably indeed, the history of the growing understanding of Gondwana, and introduces the landscapes, plants and animals that defined it at different points in its existence. Back in the sixth century the Greek philosopher Xenophanes recognised fossil sea shells for what they were and understood that the mountains they rested on must have been under an ocean – but many a backward intellectual lapse was to come of course. Morris leads us step by intriguing step through this journey. A lot of the details and players were hitherto unfamiliar to me, which surprised me but of course that was just hubris. The often fractious story of gradually understanding the concept of plate tectonics ('continental drift') is here, as is the search for the 'smoking gun' which took all the dinosaurs 66 million years ago. He builds a theme around the ancient seed-bearing tree *Glossopteris* whose fossils eventually appeared in all the Gondwanan lands, and as a device it works well. Robert Scott carried 16kg of stones bearing *Glossopteris* fossils on the last terrible and fatal journey across the Antarctic ice. Morris makes little secret of the fact that his main passion is plants and this helps him create pictures for us. A real strength of the book is the series of 4-6 page cameo pictures of Gondwana at different stages in its history; they are compellingly evocative. Morris really does tell a good story, and his visit to the Falklands/Malvinas to collect *Glossopteris* fossils manages in a few pages to be both history and travelogue. He ends the book with a vision of the earth as it might be 250 million years into the future, but I'll leave you to discover what that could be. I commend this book to you.



The Road to Gondwana; in search of the lost supercontinent by Bill Morris Exisle Publishing, Dunedin. 264 pages. RRP \$40

[Ian Fraser is a Canberra-based professional naturalist and writer. In 2012 he launched the natural history blog 'Ian Fraser, Talking Naturally', at <http://ianfrasertalkingnaturally.blogspot.com.au/> This contribution was submitted by Meg Byers, who knows Ian through previous environmental tours in Australia. Editor]



Eucalyptus 'Baby Blue' flower, buds and foliage

Coming events of interest

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

3 June 2023 – APS Victoria Committee of Management Meeting at 10am at Deep Creek Reserve Function Room, 62 Cameron Way, Pakenham.

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.

22 & 23 July 2023 – Cranbourne Friends RBGV Autumn Plant Sale. 10 am to 4 pm. Wide range of plants, plant list available one week before sale. Website: rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

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.

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
June	Thursday	8	A slide show and talk on Mint Bushes by Miriam Ford at 2PM in the Morwell Bowling Club. Optional lunch off the menu at 12 noon.	12 noon
Oct	Fri - Sun	20 to 22	Possible trip to Blackwood/wombat State Forest/Melton Botanic Gardens to be confirmed.	
Jan	Mon-Fri	15 to 19	Trip to Mt Baw Baw staying at Edski Lodge. Pencil this one into your calendar.	

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	42	101	112									275
Brian	Drouin (east)	22	44	110	93									269
Warren	Yarragon	49	35	80	69									233
Wayne	Tanjil South	25	43	100										168
Peter	Mirboo North	35	57	113	96									301
Judy	Moe South	26	33	80	66									205
Mike	Boolarra	20	43	114	61									237
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	24	36	94	65									219
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