

Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society
Latrobe Valley Group Inc.
No. A0045337C

Issue No. 324 – October 2023

Grevillea chrysophaea – Golden Grevillea

This Month

Event A weekend trip to Blackwood and Lerderderg State Park.

Location The Blackwood Outdoor Education Centre at
1015 Greendale – Trentham Rd, Blackwood.

Date Friday October 27 to Sunday October 29

Time Friday afternoon to Sunday afternoon.

Come along and explore some of the natural areas around Blackwood. We also expect to call in and have a look at the Melton Botanic Garden.

See more info on page 3 or go to the website at

<https://www.blackwoodsoec.vic.edu.au/>. for details on what to bring, etc.

For further info call Mike or Col.

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Jill mentioned to me that I might like to write about my current trip away and then I saw the suggestion again in the newsletter... So here I go.

My younger brother Mick is getting married on the 16th of September in Byron Bay so instead of flying up I decided to make a bit of a holiday and drive. I bought a van last year and had already made a bed and put in a fridge so all I needed to do was get in and go. I drove off on the 24 August leaving quite late and stopped for the night at Yea. I stop every couple of hours to have a stretch, something to eat or drink. The community house at Yea is just across the road from the all-night toilet facility, in the middle of town. I parked next to the community bus and slept peacefully all night.

The next stop was a roadside stop on the Hume Hwy at Gundagai. The weather was pretty cold and miserable, so I lit my little rocket stove and after dinner warmed myself watching the sunset. I was surrounded by low hills, and I could hardly believe it.

When in silhouette 2 male kangaroos were fighting each other with the sun setting behind. I was utterly transfixed until they bounded off and disappeared.

I drove on to Canberra to stay with my sister Kathy and her partner. If I thought it was cold sitting beside the highway well, Canberra was bloody freezing.

I spent a day at the Arboretum. Just fabulous. The Information Centre, displays & restaurant/cafe was second to none. The panoramic views of the Arboretum and Lake Burley Griffin; Stunning.

The stand of Cork trees with the ongoing harvesting of the cork, the growing of the young silver birch among the protective grey birch trees until the young silver's develop and the propagation & stand of the Wollemi pines; one of the most significant botanical finds in 100 years are just some of the amazing stories to be discovered.

The vegie garden was a delight. I feasted on snow peas, nasturtium, chives, parsley and so much more. Freshly picked and munched on - I was in my element.

My next free camp was at Dixons Creek further north along the Hume. Met some other campers, Raylene, Robert, and Tony and had great philosophical discussions around the campfire. All the problems of the world solved.

I left the Hume and ventured to the Southern Highlands of NSW. Stayed at Bundanoon. Lots of rain & thunder today, couldn't see the blue Moon because of the cloudy sky. Love this town, like a Scottish hamlet the brochure described. A Scottish festival is hosted every year. I slept beside a railway line and watched the goods and passenger trains go noisily by. I liked trains ever since I was a child and would visit Uncle Tom and Auntie

Noreen at St Arnaud and sit on the farm fence counting the rolling stock as it rumbled past. The next destination was the Lane Cove National Park in Sydney. I had a Specialist appointment in Sydney and a friend to visit. I met BJ & others on a cruise of the Inside Passage in Alaska some years ago. We all now meet every year for a week or so somewhere new including Tasmania and Norfolk Is.

Spending seven days at the Caravan Park next to the National Park was great.

Only a 15 minute walk to North Ryde station - my gateway to the sights & sounds of Sydney. Seniors Opal Card made travelling on the public transport system cheap as chips.

In contrast the National Park was full of bird song among eucalypt forest, casuarina woodland with Lane Cove River running nearby.

A collection of Grass trees had long flower spikes. Lots of Eastern Water Dragons sunning themselves, I lost count after 14. Male Brush Turkeys monitoring their huge mounds of leaf litter and possibly by now containing Brush Turkey eggs.

I left the caravan park all fresh and ready to head further north into NSW. ►

The van was clean, and the washing done.

Next stop was Gosford where I called in on a couple that I also met OS. Jan and Len where on the same tour of Europe in 2015. We always vowed to catch up and we finally did. 8 years...we were laughing and joking like we did all that time ago.

Stayed 2 nights Gosford - free camp near the boat ramp. Ideal spot, cafe nearby serving great coffee with a beautiful view of the inlet.

Yesterday I arrived at Port Macquarie and found myself whale watching from Gaol Lookout, the highest spot overlooking the ocean. Lots of whales were breaching, tail slapping and pectoral fin flopping. Swimming about 1/2 way to the horizon so with my binoculars I had a great viewing.

Now I am at another free camp...I should inform you all that most of these free camps are not official and you can't look them up anywhere, A free camp is anywhere I can safely park my van and have a good night's sleep. I am now parked in the middle of Maclean overlooking the Clarence River. The weather is warming up, 24C today. Maclean is surrounded by sugar cane and every house has a banana tree in its yard. A medium sized yacht with a sailor aboard in moored some 50 metres away. A loud cacophony of Rainbow Lorikeets' left after darkness fell.

I'm only 170kms from Byron Bay and am looking forward to a fun day on the beach tomorrow. I will book into a caravan park and pick my sister Kathy (yes, from Canberra) up from the bus stop in the afternoon. Then only 2 days to the wedding. Excitement grows.....

End of Chapter One

2023 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar

This month's activity is the trip to Blackwood where we have booked the Blackwood Outdoor Education Centre's 'The Residence' (24 beds in 5 bedrooms) to arrive **Friday, October 27** and depart **Sunday, October 29** for a total cost of \$450 for the whole weekend (regardless of how many attend) to be invoiced after the event. At this stage we have 4 couples (8 people) confirmed as going. If members wish to refresh their memories, here's the website <https://www.blackwoodsoec.vic.edu.au/>.. If we have more than 5 member-groups who wish to attend, then it will be handy if people are willing to share bedrooms. Cathy and Mike can take the motorhome and park it in the driveway if we need to free up a room. If members attend but don't want to stay at The Residence, we'll have to consider how to divide the costs. Let Mike know if you need any other info. Mary and I are happy to carpool the trip there and back if anyone else wants.

Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
Nov			<i>We don't yet have a meeting topic for November. One suggestion was a day trip to Tarra Bulga National Park. What do you think?</i>	
Dec			<i>Christmas Break-up</i>	
Jan	Mon-Fri	15 to 19	<i>Trip to Mt Baw Baw staying at Edski Lodge. Pencil this one into your calendar.</i>	

If you have any ideas for possible speakers, subjects, places to go, please let us know.

This month I have been involved in some more radical surgery in the garden. Part of the motivation for this is the fact that our garden may be one visited by the ANSPA Biennial Conference attendees next year. Several areas of the garden were getting a bit out of control with plants sprawling over others and I had been avoiding acting for fear I would be trading 'untidy' for 'devastated'. In an area at the front of the house I pruned about 95% of a River Mint away leaving a very bare trunk on an old *Thryptomene saxicola*. With several new plants in the ground and a layer of mulch it is at least looking much tidier.



Areas behind the house were also up for change. Below the clothesline was a sprawling prostrate *Dodonaea* (like last month's removal) that suffered from winter shade rot but had also sprawled up into a *Hakea* Burrendong Beauty. I completely removed it, tidied up the living branches on the hakea and planted a prostrate *Acacia ligulata* that should eventually fill this area. In the meantime, three yellow Paper Daisy plants will provide a temporary filler. A couple of

prostrate *Hibbertia pedunculata* plants have gone in to soften the concrete edging. Once again, a layer of mulch draws a nice line of completion under the work.

The steep bank above the clothesline has had work too. An *Acacia pravissima*, although dwarf, had taken over this whole area. This too is gone, being replaced with several new plants that should fill the area without dominating too much. Hopefully, these areas will have filled a bit and look respectable by this time next year. Although all the garden is looking great at the moment, there are a few standouts that carry colour for extended times. They do this mostly



by having colour in their buds, flowers, and sometimes even their spent flowers, then slowly open up over long periods. Some great examples on the go now are *Hypocalymma angustifolium*, *Conostylus candicans*, and *Boronia muelleri* Sunset Serenade.



Species: *Microseris scapigera*.

Family: Asteraceae.

Derivation:

Microseris: From Greek *micros*, meaning "small", and *seris*, meaning "endive or chicory", referring to the chicory-like tuberous roots for members of the genus. Alternatively, *seris* might mean "silky" and refer to the pappus hairs on the seeds.

scapigera: From Latin *scapus*, meaning "stem or stalk", plus the suffix *gero*, meaning "to bear", thus botanically meaning to have a leafless (or almost so) scape or flower-stalk growing from the ground.



Common Name: Yam Daisy.

Distribution: Once widespread in moist depressions on the basalt plains of western Victoria, but now very rare and critically endangered due to loss of habitat as a result of land clearing and conversion to agriculture. Also in Tasmania and New Zealand.

Description: A perennial herb with fleshy, tuberous roots. Leaves are arranged in a basal clump and are linear to about 25cm long and 5mm wide with entire margins, occasionally with some small lobes or teeth towards the ends. Flower stems are usually about 25cm long as well, but sometimes reach 40cm. The capitula (flower head) is 20-30mm in diameter, with up to 20 yellow florets (petals) surrounded by a green involucre (cluster of overlapping bracts). When pollinated, cypselas (seeds) form which are whitish, hairless and from 7-10mm long, which distinguishes this species from its cousins that have seeds less than 7mm long. The seeds are capped with 30-70 bristles (the pappus) from 7-12mm long, which gives the entire seed-head its fluffy thistledown appearance. Flowering mainly occurs in spring and summer. ►



Opinion: I find it sad that this is now a rare species in the wild, when once it was common and widespread and was a staple in the diet of Australian people before the arrival of Europeans, with ample evidence that “farming” techniques were practiced to maintain the abundance of Yam Daisies and other native bush-tucker plants. Compaction of soils due to the introduction of inappropriate livestock, as well as over-browsing from that same livestock and also feral herbivores, seems to have contributed to the decline. As a garden plant, Yam Daisies are probably not on the “most aesthetic” list that most gardeners have in mind, but they are extremely easy to grow and in my garden are one of the few species that will self-seed and spread themselves around. I have even planted them in my vegetable beds to see whether they may one day be included on our dinner menu, but it’s possible that they may be an acquired taste and fall into the category of yes, they’re edible, but not necessarily palatable. Time will tell.



There are at least a dozen plants scattered around my garden, some deliberately planted in pots as companions for prettier species, some in the ground and some that have come up wherever the seed has landed. I have collected seed for the last 3 years and have far more than I need, so have passed it on to anybody who wants it, including a local Landcare Group and some gardeners who are re-vegetating or are filling smaller gaps in their native gardens. The seed seems to stay viable for a few years, but be warned, the plants seem to be a favourite of a multitude of herbivores (rabbits, wallabies, wombats), so you might need to protect them if you want to reap the fruits of your labours.

Sources: Elliot & Jones - Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 6.
Corrick & Fuhrer - Wildflowers of Victoria.
Sharr - WA Plant Names and their Meanings.
Online - VicFlora: Flora of Victoria.

Coming events of interest

By Daryl Radnell

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

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.

7 & 8 October 2023 – Open Days at Currency Creek Arboretum, South Australia. 9 am to 4.30 pm.

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.

21 & 22 October 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

20th April 2024 - APS Yarra Yarra Autumn plant sale. Eltham Community and Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham. 10am-4pm

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

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

Rainfall for 2022 (in mm)

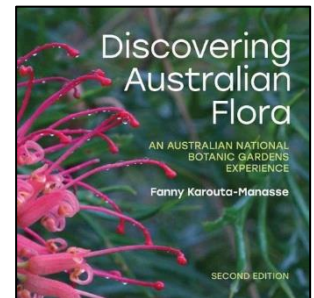
		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	67	30	81	94	60	170	90	198	60	172	193	89	1302
Brian	Drouin (east)	74	11	76	86	75	145	77	199	66	199	183	95	1286
Warren	Yarragon	107	5	55	68	58	191	97	163	64	144	196	107	1253
Wayne	Tanjil South	83	15	63	98	107	130	74	161	96	203	138	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

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	114	102	41	66	66				664
Brian	Drouin (east)	22	44	110	93	118	101	38	70	68				664
Warren	Yarragon	49	35	80	69	119	138	36	71	78				675
Wayne	Tanjil South	25	43	100	77	131	126							502
Peter	Mirboo North	35	57	113	96	132	94	32	59					618
Judy	Moe South	26	33	80	66	126	101	86						518
Mike	Boolarra	20	43	114	61	113	101	44	62	55				612
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	24	36	94	65	122	91	26	51	58				566

Discovering Australian Flora; an Australian National Botanic Gardens Experience. Second Edition. Fanny Karouta-Manasse

This is another second edition for this collection of reviews, appearing five years after the original (and where did those years go?!). It is some 25% longer than the first edition, partly due to extra photos (more on them soon) but mostly because of a new chapter on the Gardens' role in plant conservation, which is an underlying theme of the entire book. In particular the chapter is about the work of the National Seed Bank, whose Canberra operation is based in the Gardens. Fanny, now a Canberran, is perfectly placed for this task, as a long-time volunteer at the bank. In some ways the book is a series of photo essays, but there are also thoughtful written sections, such as on the two great Australian tree genera, the eucalypts and the acacias, on fire ecology, endemism and sclerophylly, as well as the work of the seed bank. She is no ordinary photographer, seemingly equally comfortable working with extreme microscopic close-ups, landscapes and plant portraits with artistically hazy backgrounds. One of her microscopic seed photographs has featured in the Australian Museum's Eureka Prize. I feel privileged to have been asked to contribute a forward to the book, in which I commented that Fanny has 'the eye of artist linked to the mind of a scientist'. (She is a plant biologist with a PhD in marine ecology from Montpellier University, who went on to study seaweeds at Leiden University.) Naturally most of the photographs are of plants, but many of the gardens' animal inhabitants and visitors feature too and her eye for detail again comes to the fore as she focusses in particular on the small fauna. Alongside portraits of birds, reptiles and mammals are many beautiful butterfly shots, as well as other insect pollinators. It's a hard book to categorise. A thinking person's coffee table souvenir book perhaps? That might be the best I can do, but be aware that this is not just a souvenir for visitors – locals would benefit from it at least as much.



Discovering Australian Flora; an Australian National Botanic Gardens Experience. Second Edition. Fanny Karouta-Manasse CSIRO Publishing. 126 pages. RRP \$50

[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]

<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