

Golden

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

Issue No. 326 – January 2024

Grevillea chrysophaea – Golden Grevillea

This Month

Event	A trip to Mt Baw Baw, staying at the Edski Lodge.
Location	Mt Baw Baw Village
Date	Monday 15 January to Friday 19 January
Time	2:00 PM Monday – 12:00 Noon Friday

This month's activity is a trip to Mt Baw Baw to experience the summer flowering of the Alpine flora. For a taste of what might be available, see Mike's photos on pages 5 to 7. Please carefully read the attached Information Pack PDF file if you are coming. It will give you all the info on what you need to bring with you and what is provided. If you have any further questions, please give me a call. Note – there are still a couple of rooms available – see info on page 5.

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Leader's Report

By Jan Workman

It has been a while since I have attended an APS Latrobe Valley gathering, missing the excursion to Blackwood and sadly the Christmas break up in November.

I was still relaxing in Thailand experiencing the end of the monsoon season and then the onset of the dry season. I really had never experienced such heavy downpours whilst the temperature remained hot ranging from 30 to 32 degrees C. Luckily, I became accustomed to the humidity fairly quickly... not over stating the role of the beach and hotel pool in this acclimatization.

One of the best things about holidaying apart from experiencing new places, cultures and wildlife is to meet people and make new friends. The Thais are such a friendly and helpful people, always smiling and interested in who is visiting their country and where the tourist is from.

I visited an elephant sanctuary and enjoyed a mud bath and swim with the elephants. I also participated in making a medicine for the elephants using a mortar and pestle. Each elephant is a rescue elephant with their scars and distressing story of forced work in the logging industry. Using elephants in this way has now been banned in Thailand for some time but still occurs illegally today.

Wishing you all a happy Festive Season and see you at the next meeting.



I have broken with tradition and am publishing a January newsletter in preparation for our trip to Baw Baw. Those who came to the Christmas Break-up in November were treated to a magnificent sunny day in our little slice of heaven in the Jeeralangs. Although I didn't have time to get the garden into perfect condition for the break-up, it was in pretty good shape. With a Spear Lilly (*Doryanthes palmeri*) showing its 4-metre-long flower stem among other flowering delights, I hope the focus was drawn away from the weeds. The wildlife presented itself with two Koalas in gum trees in the garden, and a handful of Kangaroos moving down out of the bush as the evening came on. We also had a pair of Little Wattlebirds nesting and feeding chicks in the courtyard just outside the kitchen window. It is this constant interaction with nature that makes us want to stay here for as long as possible: it seems like our lives have become irrevocably entwined with those of the animals, birds and plants that are part of our home.

We have pondered the idea of relocating to a flatter/smaller/easier-to-manage property as advancing age is steadily creeping up on us. We even made a list of all the things we would want in this imaginary new place but in the end decided that we were just describing what we already had. With that settled, it was time to invest in things to make the place as workable as possible, with the first item being the 4wd ride-on mower. In 2022 there was a renovation to improve the living area inside the house, and in 2023 we have been re-fitting eaves, fascias, and gutters, and adding exterior roll down shutters to make the house a little more comfortable and fire resistant. It looks like we have really committed for the long term!

There is a reminder and details about the Baw Baw trip on page 5 (there are still a couple of vacant rooms) and I am adding the Edski Lodge summer info pack as a PDF attachment to the mailout. Mike has been busy sorting and identifying his photos from our Baw Baw trip last year and they can be seen on pages 6 and 7.

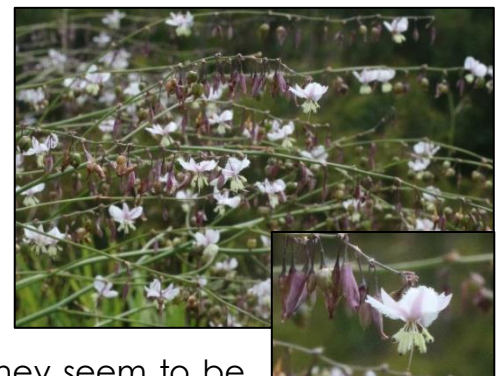
Mike has also done a sterling job summarising our October meeting trip to Blackwood and that is there for your reading on pages 8 to 12. A few people have mentioned that they have some ideas for newsletter articles, so please, if you have something, jot it down and send it to me. Send photos too if you can or we can try to transfer them face to face.

You will also notice that we have an empty calendar beyond January. Let's see if we can come up with some ideas for our meetings this year.



Around the garden the forecast El Nino has not yet brought us dry weather, with good rains continuing right up to the end of the year. However, warm and wet means weeds, and it is a continuing struggle to try and keep up with the garden maintenance. I guess there is just no pleasing a gardener!

I have noticed that the honeybees have spent a lot of time visiting my Vanilla Lillies. They seem to be collecting the pollen as I see a lot of pale pollen entering the hive. I have quite a lot of these around the garden as they are extremely easy to grow from seed and if you get them into a suitable spot, they seem to last forever. I have seen native bees on these as well, often Blue Banded Bees, so I will probably collect more seed this season and introduce some more of these plants into the garden. With *Hibbertia scandens* in flower there are also native bees making the most of this harvest.



Species: *Coleus* (syn. *Plectranthus*) *argentatus*.

Family: Lamiaceae.

Derivation:

Coleus: From Greek, *coleos*, meaning sheath or scabbard and referring to the stamens being connate (fused) in a tube around the style

Plectranthus: From Greek, *plectron*, meaning cock's spur, and *anthus*, meaning flower, referring to the spur on the base of the corolla of the first-named species.

argentatus: From Latin, *argentum*, meaning silver, with the suffix *-atus*, translated to *-ed*, and thus meaning silvered, referring to the effect of the hairs on the leaves and branchlets.

Common Name: Silver Spurflower.

Distribution: From the Border Ranges of south-east Queensland and north-east NSW, but widely grown in gardens around the country, so records from around Coffs Harbour, Sydney and Melbourne are probably garden escapees.

Description: A small semi-woody shrub with silvery-hairy young growth, usually less than a metre tall, but can get to 1.5m tall and 2m broad. Leaves are ovate, to 12cm long by 6cm wide, on a long petiole, silvery-green and velvety on both sides, with toothed margins and raised venation underneath. Individual flowers are a little over a centimetre long, white with bluish markings, but they are arranged in 1- to 3-branched racemes up to 30cm long.

Opinion: My specimen originated in the Jackson garden at Jeeralang Junction, no doubt a cutting, a pruning or a piece broken off and ending up in a pot. I've planted it in the northern bed where it's in pretty heavy shade, but apparently that is the condition recommended, along with a good amount of humus/mulch/ organic matter, which it also has in abundance. The references also say that the plants respond well to heavy pruning, which they need every two or three years to keep▶



them in good nick, but I don't think I'll need to do that as our cold winters do it for me. I have noticed that when we get a frost heavy enough to get into the garden, which only happens every 2 or 3 years anyway, this plant very quickly loses all its leaves and dies back to ground level, only to sprout up again when the weather warms up in Spring. Saves me doing it! The flowers also seem to be attractive to Blue-banded Bees, along with the Isotomes that self-seed around the place, as I've noticed quite a few visitors in the warmer weather. The little blighters are usually too fast for me to get good photos though.

Sources: Elliot & Jones - Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 7.

January meeting reminder – Mt Baw Baw Edski Lodge

This is a reminder that we have a confirmed booking for the Edski Lodge on Mt Baw Baw from Monday, January 15th to Friday, January 19th, 2024 (4 nights).

Last year a few members joined the Native Orchid Society at Baw Baw in January and found that there were not only orchids, but many other native plants flowering at this time of year. At night we were also intrigued by the moths and insects that were attracted to the lights.

There are 10 bedrooms available with various arrangements of double beds (3 rooms) and single bunks, for a capacity of 36 guests per night.

Mattresses and pillows are provided, but all bedlinen (sheets, pillowcases, blankets, doonas, etc), towels, toiletries and food must be brought along by guests. Kitchen and living areas are communal and separate male/female ablution blocks are installed.

Please bring your own meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner). There are boxes in a shared pantry space to be allocated to each family group, and plenty of fridge space available.

At this stage we have 16 people confirmed as coming and have 8 bedrooms dedicated. There are still 2 remaining bedrooms available. With 16 people the cost works out at about \$113 **per person** for the entire stay of 5 days/4 nights and would reduce if more people come. If you would like to come, call Col Jackson on 0429095527.

The full Edski information pack has been attached to the newsletter email as a PDF attachment.

Mike must have had too much time on his hands while holidaying in WA and has sent me these photos that he took last January on Mt Baw Baw. The following two pages are an example of what we might see this year. ►





Herbfield



Large Mountain Greenhood



Candle Heath



Triggerplant



Alpine Orites



Mountain Bird Orchid



Alpine Daisybush



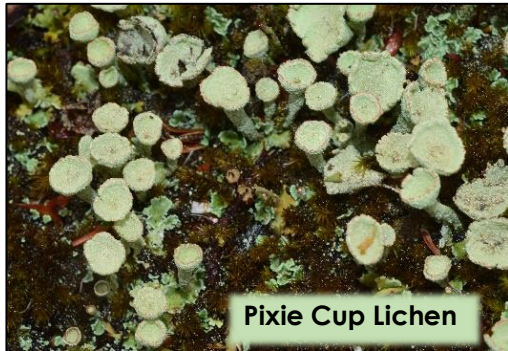
Foam Lichen



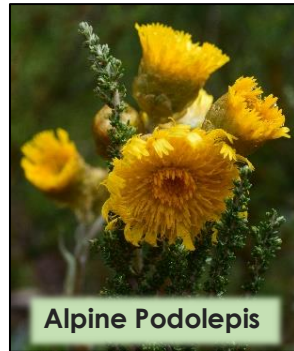
Alpine Riceflower



Alpine Mintbush



Pixie Cup Lichen



Alpine Podolepis



Pretty Grass-flag



Creeping Fan-flower



Baw Baw Berry



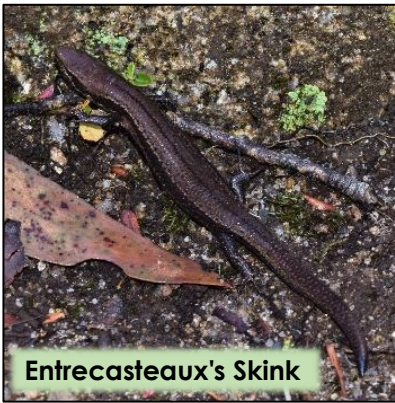
Mountain Clubmoss



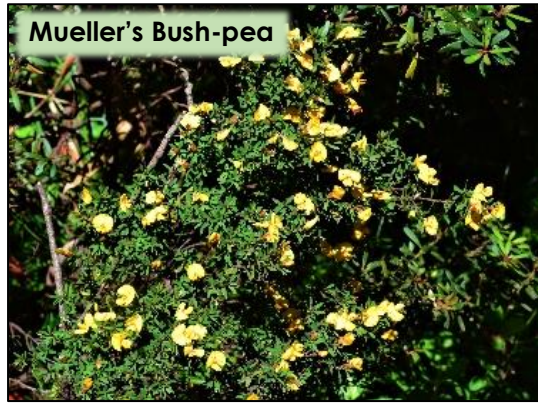
Baw Baw Eyebright



Green Bird Orchid



Entrecasteaux's Skink



Mueller's Bush-pea



Candle Heath



Triggerplants



Alpine Sundew



Gunn's Woodruff



Australian Fruit Fly on Craspedia



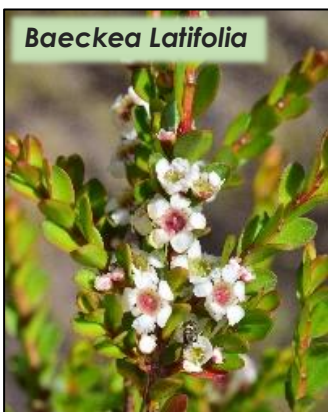
Graceful Sun Orchid



Mauve Leek Orchid



Alpine Bottlebrush



Baeckea Latifolia



Cinnamon Bells



Southern Water Skink



Slender Ringtail on Dagger Rush



Summer Greenhood

Miracles never cease! We planned to leave home about 10ish but were up and at 'em early and on the road by 8.45am. Some last-minute chores on the way and we were heading into the big smoke before lunch when the motorhome gremlin reared its ugly head again and we dropped into limp mode just before the Eastlink interchanges. Deeming it too difficult or dangerous to pull over, we persisted and managed to drag ourselves through the tunnels and over the bridges and made it out to Bacchus Marsh, where we paused to gather ourselves and give the engine a spell. When we started up again, the gremlin had disappeared, and we continued into Werribee Gorge without difficulty to wait for the rest of the crew to arrive. With our slow progress through the city allowing the others to catch up, we didn't have to wait long.

We all had a quick bite to eat for lunch before we decided on a stroll around the Circuit Track to a couple of lookouts. The countryside we walked through seemed very dry and the vegetation a bit crispy, so not many flowers were seen, but there were plenty of birds to keep us going. The only photo I took here was of the local Inland Pigface *Carpobrotus modestus* (according to the sign at the lookout) and we presumed the name referred to the modest size of the flowers, much smaller than those commonly seen along the coast. The track turned out to be a bit more up and down than we would have liked and a bit rough underfoot as well, so by the time we got to the first lookout point we'd had enough and turned around back to the cars. It was less than 30km to Blackwood from here, so without any further vehicle issues we were there by 3.30pm. We set ourselves up in our excellent accommodation and spent the rest of the afternoon and evening enjoying the lovely sunshine with nibbles and drinks.

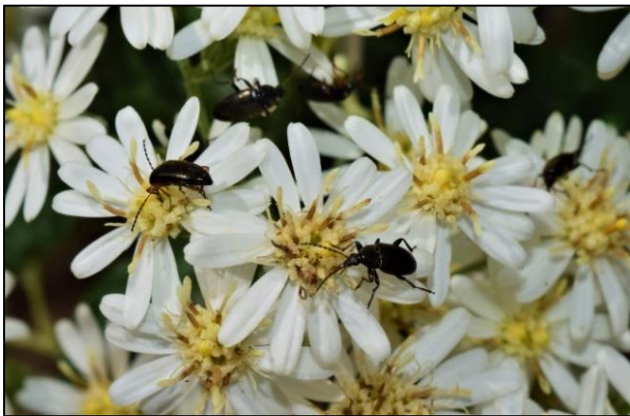


Most seemed to have a good night's rest, no doubt helped by the previous evening's lubrications, and we were all up and breakfasted by mid-morning. The sunshine of the previous day had disappeared, and the breeze had picked up, so despite it being a northerly, it was downright chilly. Out came the coats and beanies for a leisurely stroll around town, peering into gardens and checking out the old buildings. There were the occasional native plants to be seen, but as with a lot of the old heritage towns there were heaps of exotics around, generally making the place look untidy. The brightest plants to be seen were the English Broom, Cape Broom and Gorse taking over the roadsides. Yuck! Back to the house for lunch and some research on what to do this arvo.

We decided on a short car shuttle to O'Brien's Crossing on the Lerderderg River, where there was a short circuit walk. This turned out to be an inspired choice; the weather improved and warmed up to somewhere near the predicted level; the location was lovely and scenic; and there were a variety of native plants in flower for us to look at. And critters, too. Along the river were Mint-bushes – the Victorian Christmas Bush *Prostanthera lasianthos* was only just budding up, but the Round-leaved Mint *P. rotundifolia* already had their little purple flowers on display. Several daisies were growing up the hillsides – Cut-leaf Daisy *Brachyscome multifida* with its pale purple rays, Common Everlasting *Chrysocephalum* ►



apiculatum with its clusters of yellow buttons, Hoary Sunray *Leucochrysum albicans* with its clumps of silver leaves and large yellow flowers and Button Everlasting *Coronidium scorpioides* with its single yellow buttons. I think it was Snowy Daisy Bush *Olearia lirata* that was covered in white sprays and lots of visiting insects. There were Billy Buttons *Craspedia* sp., and *Podolepis* daisies too.



Seven species of orchids were spotted, though they weren't in great numbers and two of them, a Donkey and a Sun Orchid, were yet to open their buds. Common

Birds *Chiloglottis valida* were the most numerous, while there a couple of specimens each of Eastern Bronze Caps *Caladenia transitoria*, Musky Caps *Caladenia moschata* (yes, they did have a musky scent) and Pygmy Fingers *Caladenia pusilla*. I didn't take a photo of the Waxlips *Caladenia major* (was *Glossodia*). ►



Other random flowers were Mountain Clematis *C. aristata*; a tiny Geranium, most likely Soft Crane's-bill *G. potentilloides*; some Triggerplants *Stylidium* sp.; Twining Fringe Lily *Thysanotus*



patersonii; the local version of Cat's Claws *Grevillea alpina* (Bushy Needlwood *Hakea decurrens* was there too, but not in flower); Ivy-leaf Violets *Viola hederacea*, shown here with Spiny-headed Mat-rush *Lomandra longifolia*; and a pea, but life's too short for identifying peas (I'm guessing it's Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea *Daviesia leptophylla*). ►





Once we'd had our fill of the river, we headed back to base, pausing on the roadside in a couple of places before we reached the main road. The first stop was amongst a grove of heath, all white, which surprised us as plain, old Common Heath *Epacris impressa*, flowering at the end of October.



Turned out it was only 99.9% white; every thousandth plant was pink. In amongst the sea of white was the occasional splash of red from more Cat's Claws and yellow from a Guinea Flower, which I think is *Hibbertia prostrata*, a

name confused with the Flora of Victoria equivalent of *H. fasciculata* var. *prostrata*. On the graded roadside verge, tiny pale pink flowers caught my eye, they turned out to be an ex-Boronia *Cyanothamnus nanus*.



The second stop was in a sea of various shades of yellow, peas, peas everywhere. Most seemed to be all the same species (maybe a *Pultenaea*, possibly Golden Bush-pea *P. gunnii*), but there were a couple of others present as well, such as Red Parrot-pea *Dillwynia hispida* and Mountain Flat-pea *Platylobium montanum* subsp. *prostratum*. Some tiny Matted Pratia *Lobelia pedunculata* raised their heads through the leaf litter where the shrubbery parted enough to expose the ground. ►



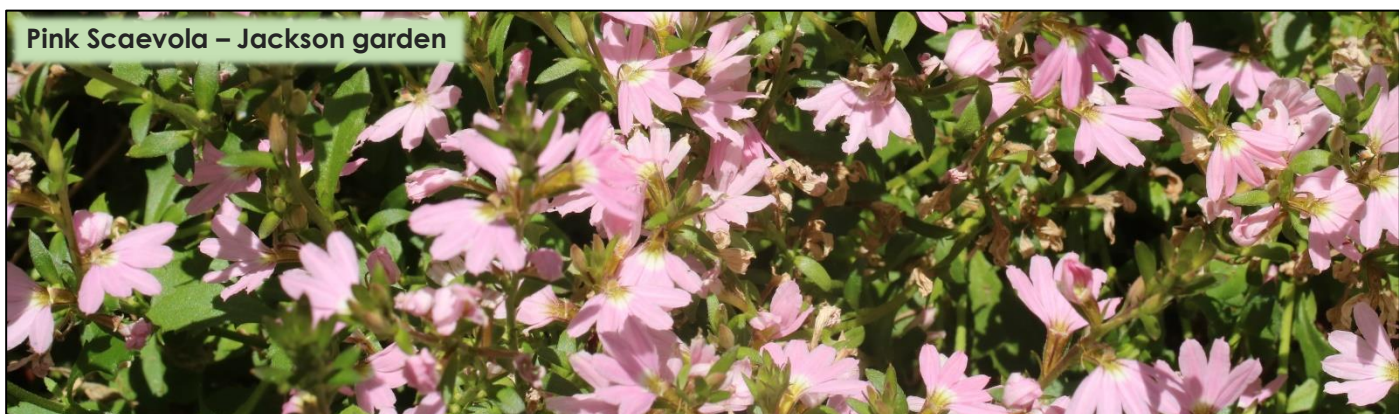
The final day arrived to a fine, sunny morning, a relaxed breakfast and the beginnings of the exodus. We decided on a short drive to Nolan's Creek Picnic Ground and a relaxed stroll around an historic sawmill site before heading back for an early lunch and the final pack-up. The birds were singing, and the insects were humming, not too many new plants were found, there was a good patch of Bird Orchids in a recently (last autumn?) burnt area and a lovely little pink Riceflower *Pimelea* sp. Not sure what the little white thing is, any suggestions? And of course, another pea, possibly another *Pultenaea*. The bush was most notable for the amount of timber lying on the ground, swathes of branches, broken trunks and whole trees bowled over. We think that this was part of the aftermath of the July 2021 storms, if it was man-made then the land managers need the bullet! The final sighting of the trip was a more-than-pan-sized trout chasing insects in the creek above the bridge beside the picnic ground.



Following lunch, the packing and clean-up, we were ready to head off for a look around the Melton Botanic Gardens before most of the crew headed home. Cathy decided that we wouldn't go backwards, instead we would leave the group and commence our trip to the west, so you will have to get the story of the Melton BG from the others. The accommodation in Blackwood was excellent, I think we all considered it good value for money and there seems to be plenty of scope for more activities in the area, should we decide to re-visit in the future.

2024 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar

Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
Jan 2024	Mon-Fri	15 to 19	Trip to Mt Baw Baw staying at Edski Lodge. There are still rooms available, the price is currently \$113 per person, but will reduce if more come. See page 5 for more detail.	2:00 PM
If you have any ideas for possible speakers, subjects, places to go, please let us know.				



Coming events of interest

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

23 & 24 March 2024 - 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

6 & 7 April 2024 – APS Wangaratta take part in Off-Grid Living Festival & Campout, Chiltern Racecourse & Recreation Reserve, NE Victoria. Providing information about Australian plants – growing, maintenance, suitability and also selling plants which we have propagated ourselves.

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

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

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

21 & 22 September 2024 – APS Grampians Group 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 hosted by APS Victoria in Melbourne



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. Website: rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au



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	177	80		921
Brian	Drouin (east)	22	44	110	93	118	101	38	70	68	184	83		931
Warren	Yarragon	49	35	80	69	119	138	36	71	78	184	74		933
Wayne	Tanjil South	25	43	100	77	131	126	55	74	59	195			885
Peter	Mirboo North	35	57	113	96	132	94	32	59	57	205			880
Judy	Moe South	26	33	80	66	126	101	86	83		193	90		884
Mike	Boolarra	20	43	114	61	113	101	44	62	55				612
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	24	36	94	65	122	91	26	51	58	200	94		859



<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