



## Australian Plants Society Loddon-Murray Group Native Plant Newsletter JANUARY– MARCH 2021 Edition



### Keith Bienvenu 17 June 1947– 4 February 2021

*Loddon Murray APS Members are saddened by the loss of their friend Keith Bienvenu who passed away recently following cancer. Standing at the cemetery at Lake Boga on a hot mallee day overlooking the beautiful lake, we said goodbye to a good friend, a large number of members were present. We listened to stories from his family, friends and workmates. Keith was always ready to step in and help and loved a garden visit to their place, maybe it was just an excuse to show off his amazing shed.*

*Andrew Farley spoke at the service on Keith's contribution to A.P.S.*

Keith Bienvenu, and his wife Ann joined the Australian Plant Society-Loddon Murray Group on 15/6/2010, following the Easter Murrabit Market where our group held a stall.

Andrew Farley recalls:

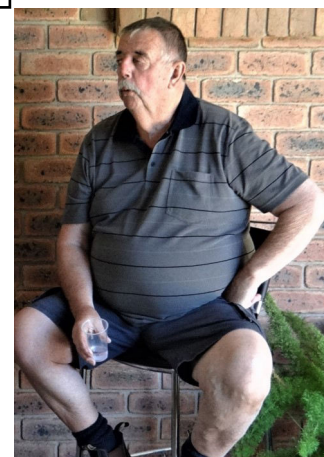
I remember that day as I was standing on our APS site and this bloke walked up and started talking to me. Next thing he says, "We are going to join." Well, I hadn't even given my little spiel about how good our APS Club was. He said his name was Keith. He pointed and said "That's my wife Ann." As they were about to leave, he repeated, that they were going to join. True to his word, from that moment on they hardly missed a meeting or an outing. Keith and Ann were very committed members and served on our committee for many years. Their home was often the venue for committee meetings with cuppas and snacks provided. Very often after the committee meetings people would end up looking at a. the garden or b. Keith's shed. It was hard to know which to look at as both were impressive. Keith and Ann didn't only grow natives but fruits and vegetables, garlic and berries. In 2011, at our conference titled 'After the Floods' their hospitality extended not only to Loddon Murray members but to members from right across the state, when they welcomed visitors to view their wonderful garden.

A more enthusiastic member would be hard to find. Keith was always willing to hop in and assist with working bees or to give members a ride to venues and outings. "That was great," Keith would say after an enjoyable meeting "I enjoyed that," and "We'll be there". He loved a chat after meetings and will be remembered as a friendly and gentle soul with a kind heart and good nature.

Jennifer Fox remembers travelling in convoy some 40 kms out of Quambatook when she was left behind with a flat tyre and no phone. Keith went back for her until he found her **and** changed the tyre. Cliff and Alice Harrison remember the day they met Keith on a visit to Goldfields Nursery. They very quickly got to know each other and had a most enjoyable day. They went on to enjoy Keith's company at many excursions and meetings.

The Mathews and Teague's have fond memories of travelling with Keith and Ann in Western Australia for the Spring wildflower season. When they met up at Ceduna, Keith could not wait to inform of distances, fuel consumption and any other readings his GPS displayed. From Ceduna they set off to cross the Nullarbor, but not before Keith had set his GPS to the one road leading west. The travellers were unsure whether to stop at the Whale Centre but it proved to be amazing. According to Don Mathews, Keith must have chatted to every tourist there before being blown away by the magnificence of the whales and their calves.

We will all miss you Keith, a friend to us all, and a good man.  
Our thoughts are with Ann and her Family.



## **ZOOM COMPOSTING WORKSHOP 10/2/2021**

**by Ros and Lindsay Maplestone.**

What a treat it was to be able to sit in the comfort of our own home and attend a very worthwhile Zoom workshop about composting.....food and garden waste materials.

Loddon Murray Waste Resource and Recovery Group (LMWRRG) organized the speakers. It was very easy to register online, the session was from 6.30 - 7.30pm, questions were taken/answered via a chat room, and it did finish on time!!!!

Trinity Mason is a Project Officer at LMWRRG and covered food waste.

We thought we knew a bit about recycling and composting, however it was so good to be reminded again and learn some new things!!

The statistics were rather confronting

-250,000 tonnes of food is thrown away annually in Victoria. 1 tonne = approx. one ute load.

- 65% of the food that is thrown away can be eaten

-1/3 of organic matter is wasted kerb-side, and of that, 55% is grass clippings.

Suggestions on how we can reduce kitchen waste includes:

Using a whiteboard to plan meals,

Make a list and shop according to your meal plans.

Use leftovers, puree excess and freeze to use in casseroles, soups and sauces.

Store old packets/ jars in the front of the fridge and cupboard. Name and date containers in freezer.

This is the information that you all know – but sometimes we forget to do it.

His message was about SUSTAINABILITY ... LOVE FOOD.... HATE WASTE.

Julian Black Hirst is head gardener for Diggers at The Garden of St Erth. He gave a practical demonstration on how to layer and make a compost from garden waste.

- We have all made compost with varying degrees of competence and success

– Some of the following hints were good to hear again.

Garden – vegie greenery, pruning's, stalks, autumn leaves, small sticks broken up.

Kitchen scraps, coffee grounds etc. not too much citrus.

Straw, shredded newspaper, ripped up toilet rolls, egg cartons, small boxes

Manure – cow is best (4 stomachs), no dog or cat poo (meat eaters) Horse ok, although it tends to generate heat.

Add a bit of old compost (has worm eggs in it) or good soil every few layers

Sprinkle with water and make each layer about 10cm (4") thick

Make a compost "tea" from manure to fertilize your pot plants

Composts need oxygen so you need to turn it over regularly. Usually takes a couple of months.

We thoroughly enjoyed this online session.

## *MICROSERIS LANCIOLATA* (Yam Daisy)

By Bill Ricketts



**DESCRIPTION.** A small shrub style plant about 300mm tall with long slender leaves along which are spaced small lateral growths. Leaves are rounded stems as are the flower stalks. Flower heads appear in early spring with nodding habit until yellow daisy flowers rise and open. These flower heads quickly turn into white balls of seeds ready for wind distribution.

Seeds appear to be very fertile as new plants appeared within a few days after seeds separated from the parent plant. And within 4 weeks of self-seeding, these new plants are producing their own nodding flower heads. However they do not like to be transplanted. Suitable for pots.

**SOIL.** The bed shown above is a raised bed of 400mm. It was filled with a Native Mix of sand + pig poo + mushroom compost. Very well draining, necessary for tuber development. No added fertilizer or slow release pills. Watered once every day.

**EATING.** This food plant is a staple winter crop for nomadic Aboriginal tribes. Whole hillsides were planted and cultivated then the tribe moved on. Given the easy spread of seeds in springtime, the crop was harvested during winter months when other foods were scarce. Plants were uprooted for the tubers which are reported as being 80% greater in starch and nutrition than potatoes. Sufficient plants were left to provide seeds for the following year.

Tubers can be eaten raw, or roasted or steamed with other vegetables. It is reputed to taste similar to sweet potatoes. I leave that to you.

**REF.** 'Dark Emu' Bruce Pascoe. (pic) Bill Ricketts.

Kangaroos Grass next. Anyone got any seeds????





## Katyids of Kerang by Anne Hall

An interesting visitor in my garden during January was this Superb or Crested Katydid (*Alectoria Superba*).

I was very fortunate to have the adult and juvenile living and feeding on *Eremophila divaricata* for approximately 2 weeks. They may have been there much longer as their camouflage was amazing! The adult was about 8cm, but the young one being smaller and without wings was particularly difficult to find, and I spent long periods searching for it.

The function of the disc shaped crest on the head is unknown but both sexes do have this hollow crest and it may be for protection. It is easy to imagine that the predators would find it

confusing. It is known as a pronotum.

Though these are common in arid and semi arid inland areas of Australia they are not often recorded in Victoria. The usual distribution is northern Australia, Queensland, Western Australia and New South Wales. The juveniles and adults prefer to feed on flowering trees such as acacia and eucalypts, and clearly also on *eremophilas*. My daughter even recorded some video of our katydid feeding, which it seemed to do most of the time!

Eggs are laid on the bark of trees/shrubs and camouflaged with chewed bark to ensure they are not easily seen. It can take a few years for eggs to hatch (depending on climate). The literature states they are more common in wet seasons. Though this may be the case further north, it has certainly not been a wet season for us here in Kerang!



The amazing thing was the multitude of other insects enjoying this plant. Clearly it is a very important plant for our insects. There were blue banded bees, damselflies, hoverflies, ladybirds, other katyids, various grasshoppers, ants, praying mantises and others that I will have missed. Maree Goods states in "Australia's *Eremophilas*" that it is a popular plant for skinks and lizards also. It is easy to imagine why they would be there.

Spreading Emu Bush (*Eremophila divaricata*) though common on heavy clay floodplain, (and plentiful around Kerang) is listed as a rare plant in Victoria. It is an extremely hardy plant and survives and thrives in drought or flood, sun or shade, and is frost tolerant. It is resistant to pests and disease. Most times it is less than 1 metre but can grow to 1.5m. Light pruning seems to encourage fresh new growth and an abundance of small mauve flowers, which can occasionally be light pink or white in colour. An interesting hybrid is *Eremophila divaricata* x *Eremophila polyclada*, known as "Summertime Blue". It is also extremely hardy but has a much larger purple flower.

My garden is feeling the dry.

We have only had 1 inch for the year so far. Eremophilas have flowered very well.

The Melaleuca coccinea has been covered with flowers. A number of plants I purchased were going well till a couple of those 43c days, so I have lost some of them.

The Sea Squill Urginea Maritima is a striking bulb in flower. There are up to a dozen flowers in one patch.

It originates from the dry Mediterranean area up in the hill sides.

Looking forward to getting a good rain to enable me to fill in the plants I have lost.

**Dot Brown.**



Melaleuca Coccinea



Urginea Maritima

### **SPRING early SUMMER 2020 by Irene Poyner**

A pair of magpies brought their 3 babies to look for worms and grubs on the lawns at 1 Randell street Swan Hill.

The antics of the young kept us amused; Then Mr and Mrs Mudlark nested in the jacaranda two backyards over.

I watched them often and was rewarded to see the two babies make their first flight.

Very soon after the parent birds nested again using the same nest - two more babies.

I have visitors of white plumed honeyeaters, red wattle birds, noisy miners and blue faced honeyeaters.

Each spring for several years now a pair of black faced cuckoo shrikes arrive, but I cannot find their nest.

2021 mid February— there is a small flock of white breasted wood swallows gathering, they will soon depart for northern warmer areas for the winter, to return next spring to nest and raise their families.

I do have flowers also in my garden, which the honeyeaters enjoy: eremophilas, grevilleas in particular.



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For those of you that have access to Face Book Loddon Murray APS has a page where you can see some of our activities that have or will take place.

**[www.facebook.com/APS Loddon Murray/](http://www.facebook.com/APS Loddon Murray/)**

Also APS Vic web site has a lot of information. **[www.apsvic.org.au](http://www.apsvic.org.au)** with the password for members listed on page 2 of March 2020 Growing Australian.



These photos all taken at our get together at Barham 21st January 2021

Evelyn provided the flowers for the tables out of her garden. They were lovely thank you.

As you can see we had a good roll up and it was great to see faces again after the COVID-19 past year.



*Thank you to the members who sent through items for the newsletter, without them there would not be a newsletter. Ed.*

## CALENDAR 2021

**MARCH Sat 27th** Working Bee at Lions Club Rooms 10.30am

BYO Lunch and tools, we would like donations of plants please.  
Afternoon tea at Bill Ricketts property.

**APRIL Wed 28th** General Meeting 7.30pm Guest Speaker Royce Raleigh

Supper duty Maplestons and Parkers.

**MAY 22/23rd** Outing to be confirmed.

**JUNE Saturday 26th** AGM Guest Speaker Neil Marriott 11.30am BYO Lunch  
Kitchen Duty Linda and Anne Hall.

APS Committee meeting at Shepparton and garden visits. Date TBC.

**STENOCARPUS SINUATUS** fire wheel tree



These are some of the specimens on the table at the last meeting . What a contrast in the type of each flower.

**GREVILLEA GLOBOSA**



**XEROCHRYSUM BRACTEATUM**

golden everlastings from the first great plant out.



**BANKSIA PULCHELLA**



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