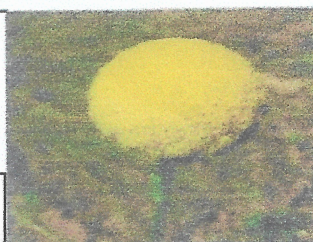


Australian Plants Society
Loddon-Murray Group
Native Plant Newsletter



MAR – JUNE 2022

President Barry Teague 0429 351 087

Vice President Don Mathews
50302788

Treasurer Anne Hall 54522125

2.gemah@gmail.com

Secretary Linda Coote 0447 134 913
coringapark@gmail.com

Library Contact

Ros Maplestone 0419 508 600

Committee Members

Lorraine Mathews 50302788

Ann Bienvenu 50324391

Lindsay & Ros Maplestone 0456 721 548

Andrew Fairley 0427 182 394

Dorothy Brown 0429 946 366

Russell & Di Parker 54521978

Newsletter Editor

Elva Teague 0427 309 433

edt9@bigpond.com

P.O. Box 1620 Swan Hill 3585

What an exciting start to the year we have had!

Neutrog presentation

And

Propagation Day



We are currently running a Neutrog product ordering shop, which closes June 14th, with delivery first week in July. Details have been circulated to members who expressed interest in ordering. All orders to be in to Linda by Sat June 12th. Payment to Loddon Murray group; BSB: 633-000 ACC: 130814148 (Ref Neutrog and surname) or cash payment arrangements made prior with Linda.

Restdown Heritage Walking Trail

By Rebekah Blair

On the 23rd of April, 8 of our members were lead on a guided tour of the Restdown Heritage Walking Trail on Jungle Lane, Thule, by the owner Don Hearn.

The property was purchased by Don's family in 1973, and in 2007, whilst mid-drought, Don and his wife Jo decided to resurrect the wetlands. They started by bringing cattle in on 2-week rotations, cracks appeared, and wind-borne seeds took hold and soil changed. Ground lichens, mosses and liverworts are the first stage of natural soil revival. Tap rooted plants grew, then the grasses within a couple of years, except for around the box trees which take up all the moisture with their shallow roots.

The big drought broke in 2011, and the wetlands began to return to their previous form, covering an area of approximately 25 hectares and holding almost 60 megalitres of water when full.

The wetlands now host up to 1,000 visitors every year, including chartered passengers from the Emmy Lou paddle boat cruise and university groups who hold biannual surveys.



Flora

Some of the common plants with the wetland area include;

- Rushes including Common Spike-rush (*Eleocharis acuta*) & Cumbungi (*Typha latifolia*)
- Reeds
- Sedges
- Nardoo (*Marsilea drummondii*)

In the areas surrounding the wetlands you'll find:

- Lignum
- Lichen (*Flavoparmelia rutidota*)
- Rainbow Fungus (*Trametes versicolor*)
- Ruby Saltbush (*Enchylaena tomentosa*) whose berries taste sweet and salty and are high in vitamin C
- Native mustard plant whose yellow flowers can be eaten in winter and taste of a cross between mustard and wasabi
- Coobah (*Acacia salicina*)
- Moonah

On an area to the north and south of the wetlands on higher red soil they have planted Coobah, Moonah and 3 other types of wattle to provide a greater diversity of birds and reptiles.

Fauna

After the gold rush in the 1870's, the Chinese came through and ring barked trees at about 1m high, and then the Anglo Saxons in the 1930's with their rings at around 1.5m high. Those dead trees that are still standing are now home to brushtail and ringtail possums, birds, sugar gliders, goannas and bats.

They have built bat boxes and attached them to the dead trees. Some of the bat species common to the area are;

- Southern freetail bat
- Gould's wattled bat
- Little forest bat



There are 5 different types of frogs in their wetlands, in dry times the frogs live in the dampness at the bottom of large cracks found in the grey alluvial soil of the gilgais, and in the thick vegetation and leaf litter amongst fallen timber.

Some species include;

- Plains Froglet (*Crinia parinsignifera*)
- Common Froglet
- Spotted Marsh Frog

There is also a variety of other reptiles and insects, including damselflies and dragonflies – which thankfully eat the local oversized mosquitoes!

Originally there were only 20 species of bird as the only trees were Black Box, after planting different species there is now more diversity, including Bush Stone-curlew (*Burhinus grallarius*).

They have a resident male Bush Stone-curlew, that every year between September and Christmas comes to the house every night and calls to them.



Aboriginal heritage

This area was originally home to a village of around 300 Aboriginals. They created around 30 terraced ponds, each with different foods that they farmed together and shared the food. Often these ponds would have an earth mound next to them.

Earth mounds were formed by digging a pit about 1-2 metres long, and up to a metre deep, removing any clay. Firewood would be placed into the pit and the clay laid back on top of the wood in balls. These clay balls were made by the Aboriginal children and functioned as heat beads. The hot pieces of clay were removed with sticks, the pit swept clean and then lined with green leaves or grasses. The food was laid on top and covered by green grass and weighted down with hot clay. The whole arrangement was buried in dirt, causing the food to steam cook, like an inground camp oven. Commonly cooked would be kangaroos, goannas and possums. They would push coals around the outside to sleep on the warm earth and over generations these mounds were formed to be the size we see today.

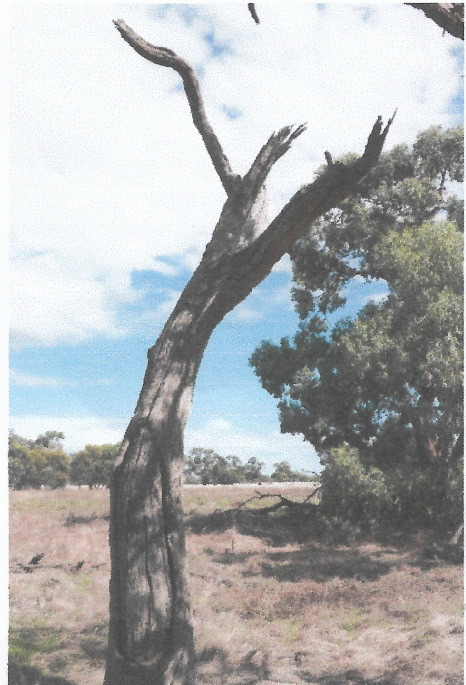
We saw a scar tree that had been cut by a stone axe, shaped over a fire, seasoned in the sun and each end blocked with clay to form a "shopping trolley". They would walk along beside the water and float their "groceries" home. There was no stone/rock here, so they traded with others.

Pin rushes were used to form intricate baskets. By running the thumbnail to split the reed, removing the white pith and then leaving the reed in the sun for a few hours, turning it into rafia.

Kabungi was used to make massive 100 foot long and 50 foot wide nets to catch ducks. Kids would scare the ducks down the water course and the adults would catch them in the nets.

The Aboriginals used the leaves of the Coobah (*Acacia salicina*) to crush and put in water to stun the fish, due to the toxins in the leaves. These trees were also used to make boomerangs.

They would test foods to see if they were safe to eat, by giving it to the oldest member of the tribe. Smallpox killed many of the Aboriginals before white settlement really came through the area.



April General Meeting

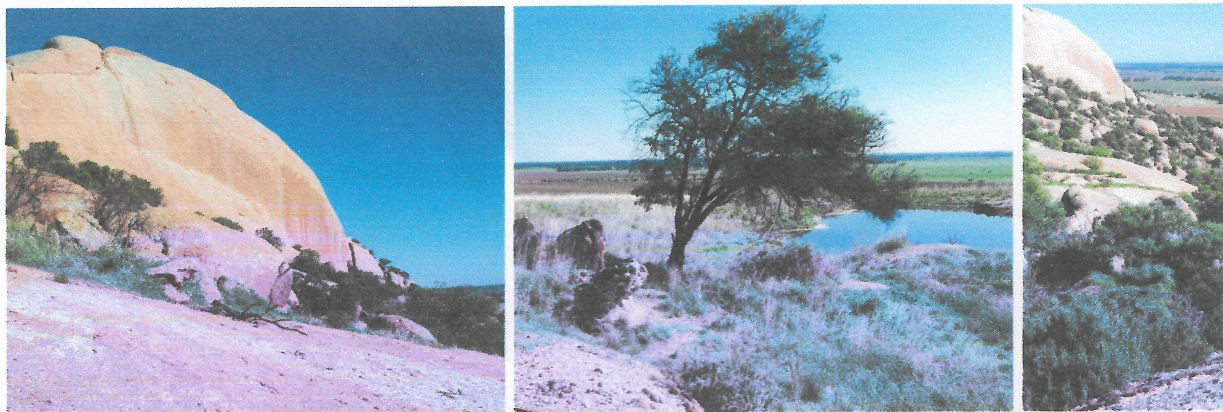


Specimen table – Hakea laurina, Pycnosorus globosus (Billy button), Correa glabra, Correa alba, Correa neils best, Correa dots dream, Grevillea wreck of the ethel, Grevillea orange wow

MT HOPE (MAJOR MITCHELL'S VISION) by Anne Hall

Are you longing for the red rock and blue sky of inland Australia but not wanting to travel too far?

Mt. Hope Nature Conservation Reserve in Northern Victoria is easily accessible from Cohuna, Leitchville or Pyramid Hill (about 10 kms north of Pyramid Hill) and is an incredible place to visit this winter. The mountain peak is 202 metres and actually consists of not one, but seven small granite hills with some interesting rock formations. A sunny winter day (we visited in May) is a perfect time to visit and I took lots of photos. My previous visits had been in mid-Summer and this is NOT a place to visit in Summer or during poor weather, as some of the granite rock faces are very exposed. On a clear day, it is an unforgettable view of pastoral and agricultural land with views towards Kow Swamp and Pyramid Hill. I now understand how Pyramid Hill was named, as it looks from this vantage point exactly like a pyramid. In a year such as this when there has been adequate rainfall, the countryside is green and pleasant with a mosaic of fields and ploughed paddocks. Perhaps this is what inspired Major Mitchell when he called it a land of hope "too inviting to be left unexplored". He hoped from the summit to see the southern coastline but he was a little mistaken!



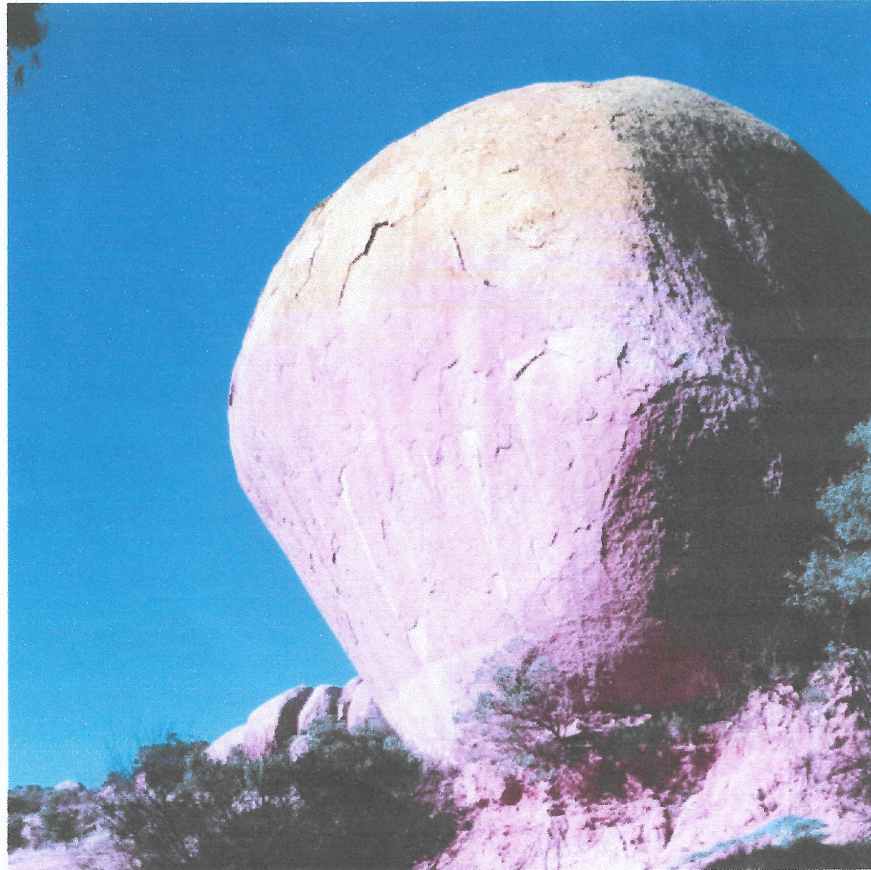
We found plenty of lovely plants on our climb. There were rock ferns (*Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia*), and rock correas (*Correa glabra*). The correas were flowering madly and entertaining the bees and other insects which were then attracting numerous birds. I have been told you can tell a glabra by smelling the leaves and these ones definitely have a strong smell. It is a reminder of how hardy these plants are to see them surviving in such a rocky and exposed location. The pretty purple rock isotome (*Isotoma axillaris*) was also flowering. The *Acacia deanei* subsp *paucijuga* was about to flower and the Hopbush (*Dodonaea viscosa-cuneata*) was looking lush. There were some lovely mistletoe plants growing on the old casuarina trees (*Allocasuarina verticillata*) and some unique grasses *Agrostis avenacea*, *Danthonia* and *Stipa* species some of which are only found in this area. You may in other seasons find Nodding blue lily (*Stypantra glauca*), *Clematis microphylla*, *Drosera peltata*, *Lavatera plebeia* or *Pimelea linifolia*. It is right at the summit that we found an amazing group of butterflies. Why were they right at the summit? It was a mystery to us, but a magical experience. With eagles and other birds of prey to watch, we spent some time at the summit.



On the ascent there were lizards sunbaking and a wallaby popped out from among the rocks and almost hopped over my feet! There was plenty to see. It would be a great place to take the kids when you want to "give them some exercise".

Historically it is an interesting place with Major Mitchell exploring the area in 1836 and also Burke and Wills camping there. Mt Hope Station was selected in 1845 and part of the old homestead can still be seen from the summit. In 1857 there were rumours of gold but none was found. Burke and Wills camped in 1860 and their naturalist Ludwig Becker commented on the wealth of butterflies and moths swarming about in the "rich blooming vegetation". Stone from a quarry at Mt Hope was used for many of the roads around Kerang, Boort and Cohuna.

It is possible to incorporate a drive to the Terrick Terrick National Park but we happily filled in several hours exploring Mt Hope and photographing the interesting rock formations, plants and the expansive 360 degree views. We still didn't see it all. We are definitely going back again and we're taking a local guide next time to help us find all the interesting areas...like the Mt Hope Cave and some of the elusive pathways.



THINGS TO NOTE

*The walking tracks are not well marked (NOT MARKED AT ALL) but starting from the picnic area and choosing a logical/gradual ascent it is possible to make your way to the markers on top of the mountain. It is rocky, uneven and occasionally steep but well worth it when you see the view from the top. The towers at the summit assist Ambulance Victoria, Goulburn Murray Water and the Dept. of Environment.

*The picnic area at the southern end has picnic tables and a car parking area but no other facilities. NO TOILETS. If you enter from the northern end there is a basic parking area but no picnic tables. We had trouble finding the path from this point. Apparently there is a pathway leading to the top of the big boulder named Suicide Rock and then on to the summit but we are going to take a local guide next time! Be sure to take a picnic and drinks with you as you might spend quite some time exploring.

*The area is somewhat remote but that is part of the appeal (no crowds). We were the only visitors during the morning, but by afternoon there were a small number of visitors.

Shepparton Australian Botanical Garden

4th June, 2022



More photos on our facebook page – www.facebook.com/APSLoddonMurray/

UPCOMING EVENTS

Wed June 15th – Committee and Sub-committee of quarterly gathering meetings, 11am at Teagues residence

Wed June 29th – AGM at Lions Clubrooms, Kerang from 7:30pm. Guest Speaker is Neil Marriott. Supper duty: Maplestones and Parkers

Sun July 24th - Outing to Jo & Greg Bear's Farm Wetland

Organised by Anne Hall

APS are excited to be able to visit this wetland to see for ourselves what can be created with imagination, enthusiasm and passion for native plants. We'd also like to acknowledge the amazing work undertaken by farmers on their properties, most of whom care deeply about protecting and improving the biodiversity on their land.

Created by the Bear family on their farm at Loddon Vale near Kerang, Jo and Greg have involved 16 year old son Alby in the planning, implementation and monitoring of this project. I heard Jo giving an interview on ABC radio and decided to ask her about the project.

This wetland was created on farm land in response to the need for a new dam for the house. In 2019 this area was bare land. It is quite inspiring to see what has been achieved. Jo enlisted the support of Damien Cook Ecologist and Wetland Expert in order to plan the wetland. An excavator formed the dam, with a wetland attached. In 2020, the wetland was ready for planting with assistance from North Central Catchment Management Authority. Sedges, rushes, grasses and other wetland plants were added using Damien's advice and expertise. On our visit we hope to see exactly what has been planted.

Fish expert with NCCMA, Peter Rose advised on suitable fish species such as Rainbow Fish, Southern Pygmy Fish and the Southern Purple Spotted Gudgeon. There was great excitement when this Gudgeon was found in 2019 in the Reedy Lake system near Kerang. Once common throughout the Murray Darling basin it is now only found in isolated areas. Sometimes known as the Zombie fish it had been considered extinct in Victoria in 1998. Despite a determined search, only about 60 have been found, and a breeding program is underway to build numbers so as to reintroduce them to suitable lakes and dams in the Kerang area. Alby has an interest in monitoring the health of the fish and does this after school and weekends. He hopes eventually to contribute to the breeding program. Up to 2000 (10cm in size) have been released into the wetland. These should grow to 12-15 cm in length. They are found in a variety of habitats with still or slow flowing waters but require vegetation cover like dense reeds, leaves, snags, rocks, leaf litter and overhanging plants. The fish are quite attractive with their purple or brown colour and also very appealing for waterbirds who like to eat them! The vegetation cover is critical.

Wed Aug 24th – General meeting, Lions Clubrooms, Kerang at 7:30pm.

Details to be confirmed. Supper Duty: Anne Beinvenu & Valda Mason

11th – 16th September – ANPSA Biennial Conference 2022 at Kiama, NSW. Latest details of tours that have now been offered to all APS Vic members without attending the actual conference has been email separately.

Weekend of Sept 24th/25th – APS Vic COMM and Quarterly Gathering at Swan Hill hosted by Loddon Murray APS group

Registration form and info is in June edition of 'Growing Australia'. We are hoping as many members as possible from our group can attend.

Organising of our Quarterly Gathering is coming along nicely, venues have been booked, Guest speaker Dean Nicolle has been secured, and catering has been investigated. The meeting next week will take us to the next stage of arrangements.

Call out for Raffle Prizes

Linda is organising raffle prizes to be raffled at the event and is calling for any donations of suitable goods from members, unwanted gifts etc. Please bring to our AGM.

Sat Oct 8th – APS Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase, Echuca Masonic Lodge Hall, 426 High Street, Echuca

Weekend of October 15th/16th – 14th FJC Rogers Seminar 'Fabulous Peas', to be held at York on Lilydale in Mt Evelyn.

Discounted early bird registrations close 30th June. More information can be found in 'Growing Australian' magazines or on APS Vic website

<http://www.apsvic.org.au/fjc-rogers-seminar-2022>

Weekend of November 5th/6th – Yarra Valley Plant Fair, Wandin, featuring Angus Stewart, Jane Edmanson and Vasili. See attached flyers.

APS VIC IMPRESSA AWARD ANNOUNCED

Exciting news from APS Vic COMM held in Shepparton on June 4th is that our very own president Barry Teague is to be awarded an Imprensa award for Outstanding Service to Australian Native Plants. His well deserved award will be presented at the APS Vic AGM to be held in Swan Hill in September. It would be nice if all our members could support him by attending.

2022-2023 Membership fees are now due

Membership form is attached for your convenience. If you have paid monies since 1st January 2022 your membership carries through to June 2023.

Latest news from Neutrog with APS member

Neil Marriott, guest speaker at our AGM

WAMA / An Exciting New Garden for Grampians Endemic Plants

The Wildlife Art Museum of Australia (WAMA) is a not-for-profit organisation who are currently establishing an art gallery dedicated to environmental art. The gallery will be surrounded by an Australian native botanic garden, natural bushland and wetlands that will inspire not only environmental artists, but nature lovers, botanists, horticulturalists, and home gardeners alike.

WAMA is located on a beautiful property just outside Halls Gap, at the foot of the majestic Grampians/Gariwerd National Park in western Victoria.

The Grampians region is a particularly special area in Victoria holding over 30% of the states flora, with this endemic garden alone set to house over 77 species of native plants, many of which are listed as rare, endangered or critically endangered.

"This will be the first time anywhere where all these Grampians plants will be grown in the one location. Even the most enthusiastic and athletic nature lovers would struggle to see all of these plants in the wilds of the Grampians, with some confined to only one or two tiny populations, some only found on the sub-alpine mountains, while others are only found in the deep, fern lined creek lines in the valleys. To have all growing at one location in specially designed gardens to suit all the differing terrain and microclimates will be a unique experience for nature lovers, gardeners, photographers, and artists alike." says WAMA Flora Team Leader, Neil Marriott.



To make this exciting plan a reality, in 2019 WAMA obtained a botanic gardens grant from the Victorian government for the establishment of the dedicated garden.

With funds established and design plans ready to go, WAMA founded their propagation team tasked with propagating all of the approximately 77 native plant species. A former plant nurseryman residing only a few kilometres away from the site has also generously opened his old nursery site to the community for this propagation project.

"We were fortunate to already have around 20 of these plants already growing in our teams' native gardens, giving us access to good supplies of seed and cuttings for their propagation" says Neil.

Alongside the generous help from the community in the Grampians region, WAMA have also established partnerships with Royal Botanic Gardens, Melbourne and Cranbourne, that will enable WAMA to continue to build their extensive range of endemic plants.



At the first planting scheduled to occur this winter, WAMA will be using Neutrog's Seamungus to condition the soil and ensure strong and healthy root development. While adding essential microbiology to the soil, Seamungus will also help to keep the plants resistant to heat, frost, pests and diseases, ensuring their survival after planting.

The Grampians is one of the state's fastest growing tourist destinations for those wanting to get back to nature. We look forward to seeing the progress as WAMA Grampians Endemic Garden continues to take shape into a spectacular showcase of Grampians endemic plants.

Soils on the site are free draining, sandy and well known to the native plant community for its suitability for cultivation of Australian native plants. The climate is Mediterranean with cool, wet winter and hot, dry summers.

WAMA's Endemic Botanic Gardens will receive good annual rains due to its proximity to the Grampians mountains, with large supplies of high-quality ground water and a shallow bore and solar pump to ensure irrigation of the gardens once planted.



125 Quayle Road. Wandin
yarravalleyplantfair.com.au

Plant Fair Invitation November 5 & 6, 2022

It is a lovely winter's day in Melbourne's Yarra Valley and we are working on our Speaker Program for this year's Spring Plant Fair. It is five months away but the time will fly by and so it is also time to send out this invitation to those who most love plant fairs, the Garden Clubs. November seems a long way off but now is a good time to plan your late spring visits.

This will be our seventh Plant Fair and our second since the end of Lockdowns. Both the 2021 Spring and 2022 Autumn fairs were a great success. We had over 2500 people attend each event and spend time talking with likeminded plant people. With over 40 exhibitors there was some real plant knowledge and heart felt discussions happening.

Like all our previous events we will have a full program of speakers, over 40 stall holders, door prizes and a chance to sit and enjoy some nice food, local wine and beer and lookover the beautiful Yarra Valley whilst talking plants with old and new friends. On the stage this year (both days) we will have Angus Stewart talking about his work collecting and breeding Australian plants with particular reference to his collection of Kangaroo Paw (*Anigozanthos sp*). His work is well respected around the world and his books and web sites – Gardening with Angus are enjoyed by new and experienced plants people. He will be accompanied by Melbourne's own Vasili who will talk on fertiliser and watering requirements for the home garden with special reference to edible plants and veggie gardens.

On Sunday Jane Edmanson will make a cameo appearance to speak about her garden favourites and of course meet all the visitors. Jane is a friend of ours and we know much she appreciates the chance to meet people and talk plants.

As usual we will have some of our special stall holders talk on their area of expertise and passion. Philip Vaughan – one of Victoria's best growers, grafter and collector of dry land Natives. To wave the flag for the exotics we will have Peter Teese from Yamina Rare Plants talk about his favourite plant groups and how to grow them in your garden. Of course good gardening needs good tools and accessories and our preferred supplier of Garden Tools, Paul Kirkpatrick will share some of the wisdom he has built from a lifetime of working with plants and gardens.

This year we will have at least two full blown landscapers on site with a design that could easily fit into your garden. There will be at least one designer there to help you design your home garden. You can then take the design and find all your plants on site to be ordered for later delivery/collection – when you are ready to plant. This year we have invited a pet shop that specialises in bird, fish, indoor and outdoor enclosures along with the new and evolving sector of Aquascaping. We will have outdoor furniture makers and garden ornaments so you should be able to design and fill your garden all at the one place. This will save you time and unlike a visit to the big sheds you will be able to access the advice and knowledge of the real experts.

Of course we will have thousands (at least 5000) of plant varieties across all the families; succulents, natives, bulbs, edibles, perennials, indoor, trees and shrubs including dedicated site for begonia and peonies. Many of these are not available through nurseries or even mail order. We find the plant range enticing and still keep collecting so we know you will. We encourage you and you members to book early for your visit to this great venue. Discount bookings can be made through the web site www.yarravalleyplantfair.com.au or for over ten you can book directly with Clive (0414 242 710). Book, pay before and get an extra 10% discount of the online prices. Tickets are also available at the gate.

Yarra Valley Spring Plant Fair and Garden Expo – Saturday and Sunday November 5 & 6. 10 am to 5pm.
125 Quayle Road Wandin.

Clive Larkman.



Yarra Valley

Spring
2023

Plant Fair

Meet the experts

& Garden Expo

Angus Stewart
Sat & Sun



Jane Edmanson
Sunday

Vasili
Sat & Sun



November 5 & 6



125 Quayle Rd, Wandin

45 + vendors selling over 1000 varieties



Discounted
tickets
online

Free parking* Dogs welcome* Demonstrations

www.yarravalleyplantfair.com.au

