



AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY

Yarra Yarra Group Inc.

(Incorporation No: A0039676Y)

Newsletter September-October 2023

Dear Members,

The recent Spring rains have been a real boon, as a dry hot summer has been forecast. My plants are thriving but unfortunately so are the weeds! I have been doing lots of weeding but also pruning. I am a late comer to pruning of native plants but now am a true convert.

According to the experts, pruning of native plants encourages healthy plants by:

- Promoting more flowering.
- Denser growth.
- Establishes a good shape.
- Cutting out dead diseased and damaged growth.
- Cutting out pests

It is said that when we prune, we are mimicking nature. As in the bush, plants get pruned by animals nibbling away at foliage, flowers and fruit.

*Speaking of healthy growth, our Yarra Yarra group continues to grow! **A very warm welcome to the following new members:***

Marianne Doczi, Sarah Cook, Bronwyn Hookey, Naomie Sunner, James Thompson, Heather Wilson, Gail Bradley, Paul and Tess Byrne, Sally Collyer, Mary Belay, James Cornelious and Rachael Brown.

Editor

Latest News

EXPO 2023 – 9/10 September!

All photos by Andrew McCann except where indicated.



Attendance numbers were a little down this year, 656, as compared to 902 in 2022. Consequently, profits were also down, approximately \$1,255 this year as compared to \$2778 last year. A sign of the financially stressed times?

However, on a positive note, we gained 11 new members for our group. Our flower displays looked fantastic and there was much interest and many positive comments from the public. Also (the editor thinks) the layout of stalls, presentation and overall organisation of the event seems to get better every year, as we learn from previous mistakes.

The most important aspect of Expo for me is the team effort, the collective experience and the shared learning that occurs. As Peter Smith reflects on below, our Expo provides a very important educational function.

A big thank you to all involved. We couldn't do it without your help. A special thanks to Jill Lulham, our chief organiser.

A View from the Front Desk by Peter Smith

Peter and Leonie at the front desk at Expo.



In between greeting the public at Expo, there is a bit of time to reflect on ... Why Expo ?

I go along to monthly meetings to listen and learn, and to share in the learning and also to socialise. I go along to garden visits and outings to look and listen, learning from other peoples' gardens and of course there is the social side. Some members go along to the Growers'

Group to learn how to propagate, share the experience and once again socialise.

We hold the Expo to share our interest, to sell plants but I think more importantly to educate people. It is an important way our Society fulfils its aim - To Promote the Appreciation and Preservation of OZ Plants.

Behind the front desk, at this year's Expo, Fiona Parkin created a fantastic display aimed at educating people in the broader benefits of Wildlife Gardens. We are becoming more aware that creating natural habitat gardens for bugs and creatures (that some people think of as pests) is so important in our diminishing natural world.

Great job once again everyone, and great job Fiona and company.

Fiona's Gardens for Wildlife display.



Crowds waiting for 10am opening on the Sat morning.





Many were interested in our specimen display up on the stage. Thanks to Suzanne Craine for working out how to switch on the stage flood lights!



At the membership desk. From left Nada, Janine, Carmen and Sue. Photo by Chris Clarke



Michael Cincotta and the crew from Latrobe. Photo by Chris Clarke.



**Next Meeting
Thursday Nov 2**

November Speakers - Catriona Bate and Phil Trickett on Isopogons and Petrophiles

Biography and photos provided by Sue Gwilym.

Catriona and Phil's interest in native plants turned into an obsession after they visited southwest Western Australia. They joined the Australian Native Plant Society in Canberra in 2001 and now also belong to the APS NSW South East and Nowra groups. Their chief interest has always been Proteaceae although they also have an interest in Eremophilas and other desert-loving plants, participating in botanical surveys in the desert as volunteers with the Desert Discovery botany team. They also have a keen interest in two of their local plant communities: Sydney Region sandstone which reaches its southern limit in their area; and Milton Ulladulla Subtropical Rainforest, listed as an endangered ecological community. Their property includes a remnant fragment of the latter.

Growing native plants is a joint passion and after outgrowing their small suburban garden in Canberra, they developed a large native garden on the site of an old dairy farm at Little Forest on the south coast of New South Wales. The garden features a large range of local and WA species, many rare. It provides an opportunity to study plants at close hand, and to trial grafted plants.

Phil began grafting WA species onto eastern rootstocks more than fifteen years ago, after failed attempts to grow them on their own roots. Despite expert advice that grafting Banksias was not possible, he began with banksias and eventually achieved success, also grafting other genera such as Eremophilas, Hakeas, Dryandras, Prostantheras and Grevilleas. He is also a leading grafter of

Isopogons and Petrophiles. Phil's grafts can mostly be found in their Little Forest garden but he has also supplied Banksia and other grafts to Mount Annan Botanic Gardens Sydney and continues to graft Banksias for the Banksia Garden at the Australian National Botanic Gardens Canberra.

Catriona and Phil have long been enthusiastic members of many ANPSA study groups. In 2015 they took on the leadership of the Isopogon and Petrophile Study Group. They hope to publish the first comprehensive resource about Isopogons and Petrophiles and continue to contribute to the knowledge and preservation of these amazing plants.

Petrophile linearis



Petrophile drummondii



Upcoming Garden Visits

Our next garden outing will be on **Sunday November 5th** to the Dandenongs to visit the Chelsea Olinda and Karwarra Gardens.

We would like to hire a minibus as we did for the Melton Botanic Gardens trip. So, members can either come on the bus (limited numbers) or drive themselves and join up with the rest of the group there.

We envisage a **10.30am start** - probably meeting at Eltham Lower Park to catch the bus. First stop will be Chelsea Garden at Olinda, then lunch somewhere (a bring your own picnic affair) before heading to Karwarra.

The cost for the bus will be in the vicinity of \$20.

Please let Cathy Mann know asap if you are interested in taking the minibus on this garden event.

More information will be emailed to you closer to the date.

Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda ©
www.parks.vic.gov.au



Karwarra Australian Botanical Garden ©
www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au



Future Speakers & Meetings

End of the Year Celebration - Sunday 3rd December at Wycliffe Bible Translators, 70 Graham Road, Kangaroo Ground, (Mel 271C10) at 1:00pm.

This will be our last meet up for the year. There will be covered seating in the Rotunda but feel free to bring your own chair if you wish. The group will provide finger food and drinks. Roy and Janet will show us around the grounds and update us on their latest planting projects.

There is plenty of parking and there will be signs on the road in. There will be a raffle on the day so please bring coins for the purchase of tickets.

Please phone or text Peter Smith to RSVP on 0425798275.

Flower Table September

By Sue Gwilym. Photos from Document Camera (DC) by Andrew McCann

Thank you to everyone who brought along flower specimens for our September meeting and to Mike Williams and Miriam Ford for leading the Flower Table discussion:



Dodonaea boroniifolia (DC)



Dryandra polycephala (DC)



Eremophila microtheca (DC)



Eutaxia myrtifolia (DC)



Grevillea 'Winparra Gem' (DC)



Hypocalymma angustifolia white (DC)



Lysiosepalum involucreatum (DC)



Indigofera australis (DC)



Prostanthera rhombea (DC)



Isopogon formosus x dubius (DC)



Prostanthera rotundifolia (DC)



Templetonia retusa apricot form (DC)



Thomasia macrocarpa (DC)



Thomasia sarotes (DC)

Other plants featured:

Acacia drummondii, *Acacia restiacea*, *Astrolasia 'Lemon Essence'*, *Banksia ericifolia*, *Billardiera scandens*, *Boronia megastigma*, *Dampiera rosmarinifolia pink form*, *Diplolaena angustifolia*, *Dryandra praemorsa*, *Eremophila drummondii*, *Eremophila halgrophyna chimera*, *Eremophila maculate*, *Eremophila 'Pink Panther'*, *Eremophila splendens*, *Grevillea flexuosa*, *Hakea bucculenta*, *Hakea bucculenta x francisiana*, *Hardenbergia comptoniana white*, *Hibbertia empetrifolia*, *Kennedia rubicunda*, *Olearia homolepis*, *Pimelea nivea*, *Prostanthera cryptandroides*, *Prostanthera*

galbraithiae, *Prostanthera incisa*, *Prostanthera ovalifolia*, *Prostanthera ovalifolia purpurea*, *Prostanthera stenophylla*, *Thomasia solanacea x purpurea*, *Waratah 'Shady Lady'*

Flower Table
October

By Sue Gwilym Pictures by Ben Eaton (BE), Document Camera (DC) by Andrew McCann.

Thank you to everyone who brought along flower specimens for our October meeting and thank you to Miriam Ford and Peter Smith for leading the discussion:



Astrolasia hexapetala (BE)



Chamelaucium 'Dee's Delight' (DC)



Chamelaucium x Verticordia 'Paddy's Pink' (BE)



Eremophila racemosa (BE)



Correa 'Fat Bastard' (DC)



Grevillea lanigera 'Mt Tamboritha' (DC)



Dendrobium striolatum (formerly Dockrillia striolata) (BE)



Grevillea 'Sandra Gordon' (BE)



Hibbertia scandens (DC)



Hypocalymma robustum (DC)



Kennedia rubicunda (BE)



Kunzea parvifolia (BE)



Leptospermum 'Mesmer Eyes' (BE)



Melaleuca diosmifolia (DC)



Pimelea spectabilis (BE)



Phebalium whitei (BE)



Prostanthera sp Rowleys Creek (BE)



Pileanthus vernicosus (DC)



Prostanthera staurophylla (BE)



Rhododendron lochiaie (DC)



Ricinocarpos pinifolius (BE)

Other plants featured:

Alyogyne 'Elle Marie' dwarf, Alyogyne huegelii, Alyogyne huegelii white form, Bauera sessiliflora, Calothamnus quadrifidus, Chamelaucium axillare, Chamelaucium 'Purple Pride', Chamelaucium uncinatum white form, Dendrobium gracilicaule, Eremophila maculata form, Eutaxia myrtifolia, Grevillea flexuosa, Grevillea olivacea 'Lady O', Grevillea 'Pick o' the Crop', Grevillea 'Rosemary's baby', Grevillea 'Strawberries & Cream', Kennedia nigricans, Kunzea parvifolia, Leptospermum 'Tickled Pink', Pandorea pandorana 'Ruby Belle', Pomaderris racemose, Prostanthera lanceolata, Prostanthera nivea, Prostanthera nivea var. induta, Prostanthera petraea, Prostanthera scutellarioides.

Past Speaker Reports

Report on talk by Trevor Blake - the Lantern Bushes – 7th September general meeting

Report by Cathy Mann

Trevor Blake is a writer, illustrator and photographer and has spent the past 25 years studying the members of the Lasiopetalae family of lantern bushes, about which not a lot was known or had been studied. Last year he completed this epic task and published *Lantern Bushes of Australia – Thomasias and Allied Genera*. The book is chock full of Trevor's photos, illustrations and information on this most attractive and useful family of plants.

Trevor talked about the various genera in this family comprising:

Thomasia, Lasiopetalum, Guichenaultia, Lysiosepalum, Seringia, Commersonia and Androclavia – quite a collection. Apparently the Rulingia genus is no more and has been absorbed into Androclavia and Commersonia.

Many species grow naturally in Western Australia and the inland and are very tolerant of dry, salt or clay conditions. They also make very good understorey plants, especially the Thomasias, which dislike harsh western sun. The more inland species will take full sun.

Trevor showed us examples of each genus and wonderful photos from his collection. He also explained many characteristics of each genus to show how we can tell them apart. In general, all the species are covered in hairs, many stellate or star-shaped, some simple and some glandular.

The petals are often tiny and it is the calyx lobes (usually 5 in number) which have the bright colours we love. The calyx lobes can be ribbed or not and split to the base or not and this helps to differentiate them.

There are usually 2 stipules at the leaf bases of Thomasias and plants are mostly 1 metre or so but some get up to 3m. Lasiopetalums have no stipules and no vein in the calyx lobes. Guichenotias have no stipules but venation on the calyx lobes.

They are called lantern bushes because the flowers hang down and many varieties are so floriferous you can barely see the leaves. Colours range from purple to pink-mauve and creamy-white.

Trevor thinks there should be a lot more species of this family in cultivation as they are so versatile. His enthusiasm and delight in this family of plants was obvious and infectious. Keep an eye out for any of these plants in nurseries. They will add delight to any garden. We thank Trevor for sharing his time and expertise with us. And don't forget Trevor's book is in our library if you want to find out more.

Thomasia rhynocarpa



Thomasia pygmaea



Past Garden Visit Reports

**Margaret and Paul Dent's garden in Wattle Glen on October 8th
Report by Peter Smith. Photos by Sonia Gatti.**

Upon entering "Bim Bimbi" (many birds) and driving up the hill, a large expanse of Kangaroo Grass extends across the hillside with some well-established eucalypts dotted through.

Up the top, Red Box Forest means that familiar shallow, dry, stony soil. Margaret and Paul welcomed our large contingent on this beautiful day, and once settled, told us about their gardening adventure of some 17 years. The original house excavation had created a filled bank area with 'boney' (rough rocky) soil, but with the addition of some extra soil, lots of mulch, and persistence with plants (and

battling the rabbits), their hard work has paid off.

Passing by an impressive *Verticordia plumosa*, we headed down the central steps and were soon enveloped amongst *Grevilleas*, *Callistemons*, *Westringias* and a lovely *Prostanthera lanceolata*. A couple of low growing *Kunzeas* (perhaps *pomifera*) draped over some rocks, and what I first thought to be a *Kennedia* but which Ray W correctly identified as a darkish red *Pandorea* hanging from above.

'Paddy's Pink' hybrid *Chamaelucium* x *Verticordia*



Further along, a line of roses (unfortunately not flowering) added interest. Margaret has used some exotics to pleasing effect throughout the garden. Pathways headed in different directions. Some of the fruit trees showed signs of good crop, and a tall *Banksia integrifolia* and a lovely *Thomasia* were also doing well.

Passing by *E. caesia*, struggling a bit on the dry slope, and *E. tetraptera*, I headed up the steep path to see what was left of some of the locals. It was pleasing to find lots of *Acacia acinacea*, various grasses and *Dianellas*, *Pimelea humilis* (small rice flower), *Goodenia blackiana* and *Hardenbergia violacea* amongst the cherry ballarts.

Back towards the driveway and down some mudstone steps, Margaret has planted a couple of *Pultenaea daphnoides*, adding local biodiversity. Further along there was a large *Callistemon* (probably *citrinus*), planted before their time here.

Retiring for a cuppa, with a magnificent *Kunzea baxteri* flowering behind we paused a while and thanked Margaret and Paul for sharing their impressive garden with all of us.

On arrival waiting for our briefing



Great view!



Peter and Ray having a break!



Kunzea baxteri



Grevillea 'Bronze Rambler'



Calothamnus quadrifidus



Alyogyne huegelii in the background



Cuppa time!



On the Grapevine...

Our Vic President has been out and about!

A visit to Lady Elliott Island, Southern Great Barrier Reef, Queensland, September 23 & 24, 2023

Report and photos by Miriam Ford



I visited Lady Elliott Island for the first time recently for the occasion of my youngest sister's 60th birthday. It was the most wonderful adventure and I have vowed to return. Lady Elliott Island lies at the southern end of the Barrier Reef, just off the coast near Bundaberg. It is a coral cay, quite small with an airstrip, accommodation and great snorkeling and scuba diving (if so inclined). It is famous for Manta Rays & Green Turtles and THE BIRDS.

Not that long ago, around 50 years, the island was a desert. All vegetation had been destroyed, eaten by goats that were placed there as a food source for ship-wrecked sailors! Yes, really. Then it was mined for Guano, completely and utterly. Finally, it was taken over, leased from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, by the Peter Gash family & several partners and they set about revegetating the island and returning it to a natural life-sustaining ecosystem and setting it up for Eco Tourism. They have operated the resort since 2005. It has since become a world-

leading, award-winning flagship for ecological sustainable tourism. You visit there for a nature-based experience, there is no Wi-Fi and mobile coverage is very limited. The owners have worked hard to convert the resort to renewable energy and are currently extending the solar panel array to achieve that. All water is from the sea, via desalination.

It is a bird sanctuary and each year the breeding pairs increase, predominantly Noddy Terns (there are now 60,000 birds from a starting population of 3000) and there are other rare species such as the Red Tropic Bird, Frigate Bird and Blue-footed Booby. The island management offers many different tours as part of your experience on the island. They are intent on educating and engaging visitors and are vigilant about best practice with respect for all species present. This can be quite a task for the staff with regard to the management of curious children with distracted parents as the birds will nest anywhere. All available space is occupied, even under the stairs, or behind a box of poles used for reef walking near the reef shoes rack, in the crevice of a rock with half their body & their tail sticking out – *I can't see you so you can't see me!*

White capped Noddy Tern



There are many unique island plant species as well as the ubiquitous Pandanus Palm (*Pandanus utilis*) which is common in Coastal

Queensland. They all have great nesting sites. The 'Octopus Bush' (*Argusia argentea*) so called for reasons that are clear from the photo of the inflorescence is an interesting case of adaption – it takes in sea water and then expels the salt via a sacrificial leaf. Each bunch of leaves has a yellowing leaf that decays & eventually falls off. Then there is the Pisonia tree (*Pisonia grandis*), which is carnivorous. This plant has an adaption that helps it sustain life via the death and decomposition of a small percentage of the birds that nest in it. It generates extremely sticky seeds that fall onto feathers and glue up the bird's wings such that they can no longer fly or feed. There is a plant nursery on the island and each year much more of the island is planted with the indigenous vegetation necessary to support the birds and sustain all life. They are also working to remove the non-indigenous, exotic species such as Coconut palms but doing so slowly as the birds nest in them.

I would recommend a visit if you like this kind of experience. It is expensive but absolutely worth it.

Octopus Bush



Octopus Bush inflorescence



Our regional reporter Lyhn Barfield reports from the Bellarine Peninsula

Up the garden path with Lyhn!

Photos by Gordon Barfield

Being a newbie to the Bellarine Peninsula, this year has seen the radar full of new concepts and ideas, not least learning about our local plants and delighting in being involved with all the various local Landcare people. There are so many groups who on a regular basis go out weeding or planting up whole new pockets of indigenous plants.

Being an avid bird watcher, I have recently become involved with the protection of Hooded Plovers under the auspices of Birdlife Australia. In Victoria, since the programme commenced 18 years ago, the numbers have doubled to around 700 but they are still considered vulnerable to critically endangered. It is encouraging to learn there are widespread teams of people all along the coast on the lookout, particularly at this time of the year, for these tiny birds and even more so once the chicks have hatched. They nest in a slight depression on dry sand called a scrape and there are many predators, all the usual suspects but humans also are a problem even if unwittingly so.

Being very small they rest or hide behind objects on the beach like bits of wood, cuttle or seaweed. They also use Pigface or

Carpobrotus. Pigface acts as a sand stabilizer too. They may nest beside it as well. Understanding this, a friend and myself have been nurturing a patch of pigface in our watch area that seemed to pop up magically recently. How it ever grows in dry sand is marvelous and we can only be grateful for the recent big rains to help the situation.

Nesting for plovers locally can occur anytime from now and they may have up to 4 clutches over the Summer depending on how many chicks survive.

Hooded Plover



Pigface



Need some help with landscaping? Yarra Yarra members Alyse and Michael from Blue Tongue Horticulture (*what a great name!*) are at your service.

Blue Tongue Horticulture is a small outfit seeking new clientele with native gardens or an interest in transitioning their garden to a native/habitat garden.

Our practice is inspired by the Australian naturalism movement and the work of Edna Walling, Gordon Ford, Ellis Stones and more recently Sam Cox and Fiona Brockhoff. We structure our work around gardens that require regular or intermittent maintenance.

We have trained at Burnley Horticultural Collage, and have more than five years experience working in all kinds of gardens and the broader environment. We are fully equipped to work in landscapes large and small, including some arboreal works, and the installation of naturalistic landscape projects. Contact Alyse on [0407807993](tel:0407807993) if interested.

New purple Banksia has been found!

The ABC reports that a new colour variant of the plant *Banksia spinulosa* has been found near Braidwood, NSW.

There is a theory that the purple colour may have been caused by conditions during Black Summer. Horticulturalists are waiting to see if cuttings of the plant will produce purple flowers.

For more information Ctrl+click on the link below:

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-14/purple-banksia-spinulosa-native-plant-discovered-braidwood-nsw/102951088?utm_source=abc_news_app&utm_medium=content_shared&utm_campaign=abc_news_app&utm_content=other

Diary Dates 2023

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.



Administrative Matters

The APS Yarra Yarra Committee for 2023-24:

Andrew McCann - President, M: 0419553303

Cathy Mann - Secretary, M: 0409 706 610

Sue Gwilym - Treasurer, M: 0401 250 331

Peter Smith - General Committee, Garden visits, M:0425798275

Sonia Gatti - General Committee, Growers Group, Newsletter, M:0423414068

Suzie Gordon - General Committee, M: 0457 084 467

Suzanne Craine - General Committee, Growers Group M:0407290903

Newsletter - bimonthly

Contributions for the Newsletter to the Editor Sonia Gatti by **Friday 8 December 2023** please. Receipt of emails will be acknowledged.

Email: soniagatti59@gmail.com

Or yarrayarra@apsvic.org.au

OR post to Newsletter Editor, APS Yarra Yarra, PO Box 298, Eltham 3095

Thank you to Graeme Sparkes and Cathy Mann for proof reading.

We wish to acknowledge the major sponsorship of our Expo by Hume Bricks & Pavers Pty Ltd.

(<https://www.humebrickspavers.com.au/>)

Thank You!

Website: www.apsyarrayarra.org.au

Facebook: [facebook.com/PSYarraYarra](https://www.facebook.com/PSYarraYarra)

Meeting Particulars: Visitors always welcome.

When: 7.30pm, 1st Thursday each month (except January). Doors open 7.00pm. Come early for plant sales. Supper following the meeting is provided.

Venue: Mummy Room, Edendale Community Environment Farm, 30 Gastons Rd, Eltham VIC 3095

Guest Speaker: Learn more through talks by expert speakers, and discussions following.

Flower Table Specimens: Bring along your flowers, labelled, if possible, for the flower table. Share and swap cutting material for propagating.

Plant Sales: Members may buy plants, unusual varieties are often available, or sell their own.

Library: Members can borrow books from our specialist library.

Chairs: Members, please help set up chairs for the meeting from 7.30pm onwards and put away again after the meeting.

*We acknowledge the Wurundjeri
Woi-wurrung people as the
Traditional Owners of the country
on which we meet, we pay our
respects to Elders past, present and
future and extend that respect to
all First Nations Peoples.*