



Running Postman



Australian Plants Society - Melton & Bacchus Marsh Inc



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Save the Date...

- Next meeting: Prostanthera and allied Genera
- Botanica Springs Community Centre
- 249 Clarkes Road, Brookfield
- **Thursday, 25 April, 7.30pm**
- **Dinner at Tabcorp Park at 6pm**

Speaker: Miriam 'Minty Mim' Ford,
APS Yarra Yarra



Supper Roster: David Johnstone
(if you are unavailable to bring supper,
please let a committee member know)

Plant Sale – May 11



Please let Cathy or Christine know if you can help with setup (~7.30am to 9am), sale time (9am to 1pm) and/or pickup (1 – 2pm)

Upcoming Meetings:

**May 23 – Process of Plant
Pollination**

**Supper – Alan & Jean
Partridge**

June 27 – Fabaceae

Supper – Dave & Marg Peters

Plant Sale – Saturday 11 May

Species Available
amplexicaulis
archaeoides
auriculata
bucculenta
clavata
cycloptera
dohertyi
elliptica
erecta
francisiana Sandstone
invaginata
laurina
lissocarpha
macraeana
minyma
multilineata cream
neurophylla
nodosa
obtusa
orthorhyncha
pandanicarpa subsp crassifolia
petiolaris
platysperma
plurinervia
pritzellii
prostrata
purpurea
pycnoneura
rugosa
sericea
trifurcata
verrucosa

The annual APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh plant sale is being held on Saturday 11th of May at the Bacchus Marsh St Andrews Uniting Church between 9am and 1pm.

Sellers include Russell Wait, Vaughan’s Australian Plants, Brian Weir, Neil’s Native Plants, FMBG and Ironstone Park.

We will be selling our Hakeas, as per the list just to the left, at the bargain price of \$5 each or 5 for \$20.



After an interesting discussion about the future of our group’s annual plant sale, it was decided by majority vote to continue with us hosting our own sale. Please support this vote by ‘putting your money where your mouth is’, so to say, and assist/volunteer when asked to help and keep the sale a success.

Monthly Meeting Recap – Landscape Management for Changing Climate

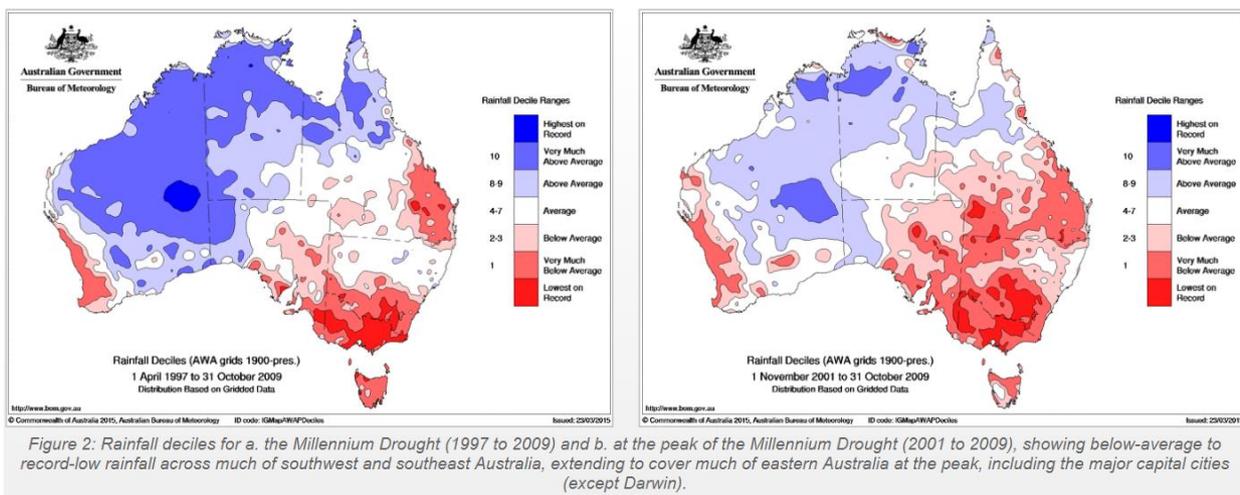
An enthralled group listened to Peter Symes discuss how the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria has evolved over the years, projections for climate change and the plans to futureproof the Gardens.

Good News: RBV Melbourne has over 8000 plants with over 6000 of them as trees.

In 2017, I was lucky enough to fly over the city and looking back over my photos, I snapped the RBG, looking quite stunning in late November.



Bad News: From late 1996 to mid-2010, much of southern Australia (except parts of central Western Australia) experienced a prolonged period of dry conditions, known as the Millennium Drought. The drought conditions were particularly severe in the more densely populated southeast and southwest, and severely affected the Murray-Darling Basin and virtually all of the southern cropping zones.



<http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/updates/articles/a010-southern-rainfall-decline.shtml>

A number of observations were made of what was happening to plants.

- Hydraulic failure, and
- Carbon starvation

Trees respond to the stress of drought by closing those pores that let in carbon dioxide. At that point, they need to rely on their stored sugars and starches to stay alive, and could die from carbon starvation if they run out before the drought is over.

On the other hand, if the tree loses too much water too quickly, an air bubble (embolism) will form and the tree has hydraulic failure, it cannot transport water from the roots to the leaves, which becomes lethal as the whole tree dries out.

The overall temperature has increased 1 – 2 degrees since 1850, and although that does not sound like much, what wasn't taken into account was the urban temperatures that are increasing due to the buildings. There is a 12% chance of hotter days because of a 1 degree increase in temperature!

There is a projection that by 2090, Melbourne temperatures will be the equivalent of what Dubbo (central west, NSW) is now, an overall rise of 3 degrees.

At the RBV Melbourne, the overall area has been studied, dotted with 'thermometers'. It has been discovered that there is a microclimate in the Fern Gully which averages 4 degrees cooler than the nearby weather station but it is not enough to mitigate the overall effect of the climate.

Don't worry, it's not all doom and gloom!

In a 21 page document (see link below) RBGV has looked at making better decisions now when planting for future-proofing gardens, called the Landscape Succession Strategy. For example, don't look at planting a cool-climate eucalypt now because it will be unlikely to adapt to the rising temperatures, will die and will need to be removed. RBGV has ~12% of species that are in this risk factor for the future. And it's not about being drought hardy, it is the increase in temperature that needs to be the main consideration.

So, what do we do now?

Future plant selection will need to consider taxa that are more suited to an environment of increasing dryness and temperature, or that can be accommodated in microclimates providing protection from water loss and heat. RBGV are still working on what these plants may be, but have developed strategies and targets to achieve the goal of providing future visitors with biodiversity and green spaces, even in cities. The are:

Strategy 1: Actively manage and transition the Melbourne Gardens landscape and plant collections

Strategy 2: Establish a mixed-age selection of plants composed of a high diversity of taxa

Strategy 3: Maximise sustainable water use and supply security

Strategy 4: Maximise the benefits of the green space and built environment through landscape design

Strategy 5: Improve understanding of the impacts of climate change on botanical landscapes

https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/documents/Landscape_Succession_Strategy_lo_res.pdf

<https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/sustainable-landscapes/landscapes>

I will print this out and have a copy available at the next meeting. Well worth a read!

Next Meeting – Prostanthera and allied Genera

APS Yarra Yarra will host the 2020 FJC Rogers Seminar and our chosen topic is Mint Bushes and Allied Genera aka LAMIACEAE, subfamily *Prostantheroideae*. There are around 90 *Prostanthera* species with many still being discovered. They have highly aromatic foliage and often stunning flowers in profusion with colours ranging from deep purple, pink to white from early Spring through Summer for some species. They grow in all sorts of places & tolerate a wide range of conditions. The Allied Genera include *Westringia*, *Dasymalla*, *Pityrodia* & 13 others. The talk will centre on the mint bushes with the last section bringing in the Allied Genera. It will be a multimedia presentation with some videos, some slides and some plants to engage the olfactory senses along with the visual.



prostanthera lasianthos CU RBGC



prostanthera ovalifolia

About the Speaker: Miriam Ford, of APS Yarra Yarra, grew up in western Queensland, then studied at the University of Queensland, St. Lucia, Brisbane (1970s) where she did a Science (hons) degree followed by a Doctorate in Biochemistry & Cell Biology. After a 3 year postdoctoral fellowship in London, UK where she added molecular biology to her repertoire she returned to Melbourne (late



1980s) where she worked in cancer research then developmental neurobiology for 25 years before leaving that profession having tired of the grant writing merry-go-round. She undertook a teaching degree (both Steiner education & Grad Dip) and then opted instead to establish a psychology private practice in Hurstbridge with her husband Michael as psychologist and herself as Practice Manager. In addition to that work she spends much time indulging her passion for gardening with Australian Plants.

prostanthera striatiflora

A Step Back in Time

This month sees an article from Newsletter No 6, dating back to October/November/December of 1991. This article is believed to have been copied from a book, although there are no references. Pictures have been added by the editor.

Please note that this is a reprint of the original article. Names may be incorrect or out of date.

Getting Started... Growing from Seed

Many Australian native plants can be grown readily from seed. Propagation by this means has advantages over propagation by means of cuttings... and vice versa. For instance, you may be able to obtain seed when you cannot obtain cutting material; seed normally does not have to be planted immediately and it requires no special equipment of any kind.

Containers. Seed may be sown in punnets, pots or shallow fruit boxes. 75mm depth of seed raising mix is sufficient. If using shallow boxes, you can sow several different sorts of seed in the one box. Divide it up with narrow strips of wood or plastic or other suitable material. Large seeds such as *Waratah*, *Hakea*, *Grevillea*, *Acacia* and others can also be sown in small individual pots. This eliminates the necessity for "pricking out".

All containers must be well drained. Be sure to label seeds carefully.



Sowing Medium. Any loose textured fine loam is suitable. If your soil is too heavy, mix coarse sand with it. Commercial seed raising mixtures are also suitable as is a mixture of about 40% peat moss and 60% coarse sand.

Sowing the seed. Before sowing, the seed raising mix must be watered to ensure that it is quite wet but not soggy. Fine, light seed such as *Melaleuca*, *Leptospermum*, *Callistemon*, *Isotoma*, *Helipterum*, *Helichrysum*, etc. should be scattered over the surface of the soil and then covered with a sprinkling of the sowing medium. Twice the thickness of the seed is sufficient. The container must then be watered with a very fine spray to avoid disturbing the seed.

Larger seed such as *Grevillea*, *Hakea*, *Eucalyptus*, *Allocasuarina*, etc. should be well spaced out in the container so that seedlings can be easily handled later on. Place the seed horizontally on top of the mix and press it gently so that only the upper surface is visible. Then cover with soil twice the thickness of the seed.

Seed which requires treatment before sowing. Seeds in this category have a tough testa (or woody outer layer) which prevents water from penetrating and commencing the process of germination. Many of them will respond to one of two methods described here.

- a) **Treatment by abraision and soaking.** Seeds of *Acacia*, *Cassia*, *Aotus*, *Bossiaea*, *Chorizema*, *Swainsona*, *Pultenaca*, *Kennedia* (in fact all of the “pea” family) require soaking and often abraision as well. If the seed is large enough to hold in the fingers, saw at it gently (and carefully!) with a razor-blade or file. Do not cut right through the testa or you may damage the embryo inside. When the seed is too small to handle in this manner, place it on a sheet of fine sandpaper and rub it gently with another sheet. Do this carefully otherwise the seeds will shoot all over the place. Then place the seeds in a cup or small container and pour nearly boiling water over it.

In about 12 hours, many of the seeds will be noticeably swollen. These are ready for sowing. Repeat the sawing and soaking process on the others; do not sow until they have swollen. Then follow the procedure recommended for the larger seeds above, soeing either in individual pots or in the larger containers.

Note that sometimes abraision is not required and the seed will swell following soaking alone. You will need to experiment to determine those that need abraision as well as soaking.



- b) **Treatment by burning.** Seeds in this category are those of plants which come up in their thousands after a bushfire, and are otherwise seldom seen as small seedlings. They are often difficult to germinate but may respond to a “simulated bushfire”, but there are no guarantees. The group includes *Boronia*, *Eriostemon*, *Ziera*, *Leucopogon*, *Ricinocarpos* and many others.

Sow the seed in a wooden seedbox or terracotta pot, then place dry twigs and leaves over the top. Set these alight and have sufficient flammable material available to keep the fire burning for about 7 or 8 minutes. Then water lightly as for other sowings.

Seeds of *Actinotus helianthi* (flannel flower) sometimes germinate without treatment but often fail to do so. They often respond to burning, but only for 2 to 3 minutes.





When to sow?

Generally spring and summer are the best seasons; winter temperatures retard germination and subsequent growth while summer is too humid on the coast and too hot inland. This is not to say that you can't sow at other times; only experience and experimentation will tell you which season best suits a particular species, though most annuals prefer early to mid autumn.

How long to germinate?

This can range from a few days in the case of some annuals (particularly the "daisy" family) to 3 months or even longer.

While you're waiting.

The containers in which you've sown the seed should be in a position to get plenty of warmth and light; full sun in spring and autumn, provided they NEVER dry out. They need shelter from rain, which disturbs the seeds. A sheet or glass or perspex, large enough to cover several containers, is a good idea; it keeps the soil moist while protecting it from rain. It must, however, be removed IMMEDIATELY the seedlings appear.



Newsletters and information

Remember to check out the dropbox account for new newsletters from other APS groups, study groups and more. They are added regularly and will be left there for a couple of months before being removed.

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/o4khgv1wrijfeg3/AABZ9PD-6KLgoLnz75N3MOM0a?dl=0>

Upcoming Events

16 April - APS Geelong. Guest speaker is Dr Dean Nicolle speaking about Eucalypts. Visitors are welcome. The Ballroom, Hamlyn Park, 1 Carey St, Hamlyn Heights starting at 7.30 pm. For more information call Bruce McGinness on 5278 8827.

27 April – APS Geelong Australian Native Plant Sale at ‘Wirrawilla’, 40 Lovely Banks Road, Lovely Banks. (Mel 431 D6). Entry is \$2 per adult or \$5 per car, children free of charge. From 8.30 am to 5.00 pm (sale is one day only). A BBQ, tea, coffee and refreshments, book sales, childrens’ activities and a great selection of native plants.

4 May - APS Mornington Peninsula Plant Sale, from 10 am to 3.30 pm, at Seawinds in Arthurs Seat State Park, Purves Rd, Arthurs Seat 3936. For further details call 0428 284 974.

4 May – Cranbourne Friends Annual Lunch in Tarnuk Room, Australian Garden. Guest Speaker is Dean Stewart.

11 May - APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale at St Andrew’s Uniting Church, Gisborne Road, Bacchus Marsh. From 9 am to 1 pm.

15 June – APS Geelong host Committee of Management meeting.

27 & 28 July - Cranbourne Friends Winter Plant Sale – 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. (Mel 133 K10)



Contacts:

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Find us on Facebook!

All contributions to the newsletter are gratefully received. Please send a word document and photos to the group's email address. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me via email or phone. I am also happy to research a subject for an article if you give me a topic you would like to see explored.

Postal address:

PO Box 946

Bacchus Marsh VIC 3340

Bank details: Bendigo Bank, Bacchus Marsh

Acc: Australian Plant Society – Melton & Bacchus Marsh Inc

BSB: 633 000 Acc No: 158993733

MEETINGS: 4th Thursday of the month, Feb – Jun, Aug – Nov (doors open at 7.30pm)

VENUE: Botanica Springs Community Centre, 249 Clarkes Rd, Brookfield

APS Victoria website : <http://www.apsvic.org.au/>

ANPSA website: <http://anpsa.org.au>

Disclaimer: Any errors in this publication are by the editor.