



AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY (SGAP)
Warrnambool & District Group Inc. Newsletter
MARCH 2018 No 435

Correa reflexa 'Grannys Grave'

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'Plants of the Great South West',
book on plants of South West Victoria



\$20, available from
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EDITORIAL

Hi members,

Isn't it dry! Our gardens are really in need of a good downpour. Hope we get one soon, maybe on Sunday.

Standardised Email Addresses: You will notice from the heading above, that we have now standardised our email contacts for our three main committee positions, following a suggestion from the new APS Vic. Web Administrator. In future, no matter who is in that position, your email will be transferred to the correct person. Personal contact details will continue to be listed on page 2.

Change of host for the next '**Girls Day Out**', Joyce Sparrow will be hosting the event on Tuesday 24th April 12.00 at 35 Swan St, Warrnambool. All the 'girls' in our group (or partners) are invited to attend. Please bring something to share for lunch. Best wishes to Sue for her hospital stay.

Our speaker for this month is Doug Phillips who will be speaking on his involvement with Greening Australia and their work in the protection of the Red-tailed Black Cockatoo. He is also a member of Tarragal Landcare Group and is a manufacturer of Biochar. Biochar when added to the soil, improves the water-holding function of it and helps to protect water quality. I have included a report from the Victorian Landcare Magazine on Doug and Biochar, on pages 6 and 7.



That's about it for this month, I hope to catch up with you at our Members Night on Friday 23rd March at 8.00pm.

I will book a table at the RSL so we can have a meal together with our guest speaker. You are welcome to join us at 6.30pm.

Cheers, Kevin

We wish to acknowledge the Maar people as the traditional owners of the land on which we live and pay our respects to their elders past and present.

Next Members Night: Doug Phillips - Greening Australia and Saving Red-Tailed Black Cockatoo Habitat

<i>Group Diary Of Activities</i>	<i>APS Vic Diary Of Activities</i>
<p>23rd March - Members Night 8.00pm - Doug Phillips will be speaking on his involvement with Greening Australia and working for the protection of Red-tailed Black Cockatoos and their habitat.</p> <p>27th March - Committee Meeting - Sherwoods at 5.00pm</p> <p>24th April - Girls Day Out hosted by Joyce Sparrow at 35 Swan St.</p> <p>27th April - Lisette Mill speaking on Woolsthorpe Project</p> <p>1st May - Committee Meeting</p> <p>25th May - AGM - Peter Dexter - Meteorology & Factors Influencing Victorian Weather.</p> <p>22nd June - Lauren Hoffman - Golden Sun-moth</p> <p>28th September - Kevin - Growing Orchids in Warrnambool</p> <p>23rd November - Anne Langmaid - 2017 WA Trip</p>	<p>17 March 2018 APS Wyndham host APS Victoria Committee of Management Meeting</p> <p>17th & 18th March Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Spring Plant Sale – 10.00 am to 4.00 pm. (Mel 133 K10)</p> <p>21st April – APS Geelong Australian Native Plant Sale at 'Wirrawilla', 40 Lovely Banks Road, Lovely Banks. (Mel 431 D6).</p> <p>12th May - APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale at St Andrew's Uniting Church, Gisborne Road, Bacchus Marsh. From 9 am to 1 pm.</p> <p>20th & 21st October 2018 <i>FJC Rogers Seminar – Goodeniaceae</i> Co-ordinated by Wimmera Growers of Australian Plants and APS Grampians.</p> <p>Monthly newsletters begin in the new year, contact Maree Goods to get on their mailing list at fjcrogersseminar2018@gmail.com</p>
Please submit your articles for the newsletter by the end of the second week of the month	
<p>President: Kevin Sparrow Phone: 55626217 Vice President: Bob Artis, 9 Gavin St, Warrnambool. Phone: 0417 321225</p> <p>Secretary: John Sherwood. 26 McConnell St, Warrnambool Phone: 55628064 Email: jsher@deakin.edu.au</p> <p>Treasurer: Mike Halls, 127 Rooney's Rd, Warrnambool 3280 Phone: 55626519 Email: mandehalls@bigpond.com</p> <p>Newsletter Editor: Kevin Sparrow, 35 Swan Street, Warrnambool. Phone: 55626217 Email: ksparrow93@gmail.com</p> <p>Public Officer: John Sherwood. APS Reps: vacant, Group Historian: Joyce Sparrow. Supper Organiser: Liz Halls.</p> <p>Other Committee Members: Kerry Artis, Michael Mattner. Sue Sherwood, Dorothy Mattner</p>	
The APS Warrnambool & District holds meetings on the 4th Friday of each month at the Mozart Hall Warrnambool at 8pm.	
<p>APS Warrnambool & District is a District Group of the Australian Plants Society (Vic) All members are required to also be a member of APS Vic.</p>	
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Trying To Grow *Eremophila mirabilis*

Our speakers for November 2016, were Maree and Graham Goods from Wimmera Growers of Australian Plants who were speaking to us on the subject of Eremophilas. You might remember that they brought with them heaps of eremophila plant material. I took most of them home and put them in as cuttings despite many of them coming from grafted specimens. Of course, some of them grew roots easily but many of them did not and subsequently died. One that always showed a lot of promise, was *Eremophila mirabilis*, this was one that I was particularly keen to get to grow. It has very attractive flowers with an unusual warty stem and leaves. Many times I was fooled into thinking that it was finally growing, only for it to sit and do nothing again! After twelve months of this, I finally lost patience with it and decided to graft it onto some *Myoporum* rootstock that I had been growing. Almost immediately, shoots began to grow. A check of the other cuttings in the pot showed that there were no roots on them at all. One year is a long time to wait before grafting a plant but it seems, for this one anyway, its never to long! Look at it now, photo on right.



Display Table - February 2018 by Kerry Artis

Marilyn Berry started our showing with *Grevillea superba* that she bought at a *Grevillea* weekend a number of years ago. It is rarely grown in cultivation, comes from W.A. and likes full sun, although Marilyn's is growing in shade and it has proved a long lived plant. It is an unusual *Grevillea* with a delicate coloured flower. *Grevillea x semperflorens* is a hybrid *Grevillea* that comes from England! This is a very tough plant, one is growing in full sun and is bushy and vigorous while another one is growing in part-shade, has been a slow grower and is a straggly shrub. Yellow-winged honeyeaters love them. *Pelargonium rodneyanum* is a very pretty *Pelargonium* that is native to this area but more common further north. It has the reputation of being hard to grow but the Berry's two plants are thriving and Marilyn recommends growing it. Koories used the tubers for food.

Bob Artis brought along *Thryptomene* 'Nadja' a lovely, small shrub with arching branchlets covered in small, pink-mauve buds that grows to 50cm x 1m wide. *Correa* 'Isabel' grows to 75cm high, is frost hardy and quite drought tolerant. It is just coming into flower and has many buds appearing, a lovely, baby-pink colour.



Kevin Sparrow finds birds are attracted to the *Eremophila* flowers. *Eremophila macdonnellii*, (photo above) is the Simpson Desert form, a beautiful plant in a pot that he's trying to grow cuttings from, *Eremophila mackinlayi* is also growing in a tub and needs potting on, *E. foliosissima* is grafted onto *Myoporum* rootstock and is growing well. *Banksia prionotes* Acorn Banksia is a beautiful, huge tree with over 100 flowers on it. It has narrow, toothed leaves and lovely, orange, acorn shaped flowers. *Banksia baxteri* has yellow, globular flower spikes, *Banksia burdettii* (bottom photo) has done well and *Senna acclinis* is a rare and endangered plant with a big leaf.

Kevin also showed us a number of plants from **Swan Reserve**, *Banksia sphaerocarpa* is an attractive shrub, *Banksia pilostylis* is a small Banksia with yellow flowers, *B. verticillata* and *B. speciosa* (Showy Banksia) can grow to 6m high and bears yellowish flower spikes. *Grevillea insignis* is attractive and quite prickly and *Kunzea pomifera* (Muntries) grows in the south west of Victoria along the Portland coastline, (See next page) producing berries which are very nice to eat and you can make lovely jam from. Kevin brought in some berries for members to sample.

Eremophila calorhabdos, *Olearia lanuginosa*, *Bracteantha bracteata* and *Ixodia achillaeoides* ssp *arenicola* were displayed as well.

Plant of the Month

Botanical Name: *Kunzea pomifera*

Common Name: Muntries

Distribution: In Victoria it is found mainly on sandy soils in the Little and Big Deserts, but isolated occurrences on near-coastal dunes between Portland and Nelson. It is also found in South Australia including Kangaroo Island and NSW.

Description: This attractive plant produces a delicious bush food fruit which has great marketing potential. The fruits of the plant are small green and red berries that have the flavour of spicy apples and a much higher antioxidant level than blueberries! They were a valuable food source for aboriginal people and Europeans quickly discovered they can be made into great jam.



It is quite an easy and attractive plant to grow, it forms a groundcover in the wild but you can also trellis the plant for easier harvesting. It's a great groundcover for coastal areas, as it suppresses weeds. It will grow in most soils, including sand and clay. Tolerant of drought, frost and lime soils it produces an abundance of white flowers in spring, followed by berries in late summer/early autumn. The berries can be ripe even when green. The plant is pollinated by insects, so planting other spring flowering plants around will help with pollination.

Kunzea pomifera was grown in England in 1889. It was one of the first species of Australian plants introduced into cultivation in England.

More Information: <http://www.gardeningwithangus.com.au/kunzea-pomifera-muntrie/>
Also: http://bushtuckerrecipes.com/at_the_aussie_table/native-fruits-nuts/muntries/



Biochar May Have Benefits For Soil and Water

Taken from Victorian Landcare Magazine - Summer 2018, Issue 71

Biochar is a carbon-rich solid manufactured by heating bio mass at a high temperature in the absence of oxygen. This process turns bio mass into a porous solid believed to benefit soil by reducing organic and inorganic environmental contaminants, reducing greenhouse gas emissions from soil, aiding carbon sequestration, managing and increasing soil nutrient supply and soil rejuvenation and remediation.

Biochar also has implications for managing water as it can improve the water-holding function of soil and protect water quality. Historical evidence has been discovered within the Amazon forests of South America that indicates the early inhabitants of the region used biochar as a soil conditioner to improve the region's poor soil structure. Using biochar allowed the inhabitants to grow substantial crops and successfully colonise the area over the longer term.



An important quality of good soil is its ability to retain water. Biochar research conducted in Japan has shown that when biochar is added to the soil, water retention increased by around five per cent compared to control soil plots.

Photo above: Doug Phillips (far right), a member of the Tarragal Landcare Group and Biochar manufacturer, hosts visitors at the group's biochar site.

Photo left: Biochar being incorporated into the demonstration site plots at Portland in June 2016.



Biochar May Have Benefits For Soil and Water

The Tarragal Landcare Group based at Portland in southwest Victoria were interested in finding out if biochar has an effect on soil structure when incorporated as a soil conditioner. With much of the region experiencing longer and drier seasons over the last few years, the group was keen to know if biochar could significantly retain soil moisture over a longer period.

After discussions with the Glenelg Hopkins Regional Landcare Facilitator and support from the Australian Government's National Landcare Program, a demonstration site was established in June 2016. The group planned to test some of the biochar theories concentrating on the benefits of improving soil quality through laboratory analysis and improvements in above-ground crop biomass.

Three treatment areas were established within the demonstration site. Each site had different amounts of biochar applied compared to the control area. Early indications are that the treatment areas with higher biochar applications have better plant development when compared to the control.

Faba bean plants harvested from the site during late 2016 showed root growth that was significantly larger and better developed under the biochar treatments versus the control.

Soil test results taken 12 months apart have indicated a significant reduction in aluminium saturation levels when comparing the biochar treatments (4.9 per cent) to the control (9.1 per cent). High aluminium saturation soil levels can be toxic to plants by inhibiting root growth and general plant development. Growing plants in a high aluminium saturation level environment usually results in plant death within 12 months. In severely affected areas plants will fail to germinate

The increased water-holding capacity of the soil has not been tested as yet due to the wetter than average summers in the area. The trial continued into 2017 with red wheat being planted within the demonstration sites and the addition of a selected fertiliser incorporated into the trial design.

The group aims to keep the demonstration site going over the next five years with field days planned to discuss progress and results.

Dion Borg is Glenelg Hopkins CMA's Regional Landcare Facilitator.

For more information about the subject of this story

Email: d.borg@ghcma.vic.gov.au

Coastal Connections by Jarred Obst.

Hello and welcome to the January/February edition of Glenelg Hopkins CMA's '**Coastal Connections**' email. 2018 is now well upon us, summer has passed for another year and our eyes are on the approaching autumn break.

Seasonal Weather

After a wet and highly productive 2017, the rainwater tap has basically been turned off in 2018 resulting in very dry summer conditions. A changing season does however feel upon us, with cool and dewy mornings recently apparent, combined with a notable reduction in daylight hours. The Bureau of Meteorology have recently released their autumn outlook, indicating that La Nina has broken down and further warm and dry conditions may extend into Autumn. *For details on recent and upcoming weather conditions, please refer to the following <http://www.bom.gov.au/climate/outlooks/#/overview/video>*

Estuary Update

Estuarine conditions across our region have remained relatively stable over the summer months. Our smaller systems, such as Yambuk Lake and Rutledge's Cutting, have remained closed with little change in estuary water level due to a combination of dry catchment conditions and low inflow rates. Our larger estuaries, such as the Glenelg and Fitzroy systems, have however remained as open tidal systems due to prolonged 2017 flows and the low number of large ocean swells experienced this summer. Whether these systems will remain open during autumn will be interesting, as large autumn tides and ocean swells hit our coastline over the coming months in typical seasonal patterns.

For a summary of recent conditions, please refer to the Estuary Update & Estuary Photo attachments.

Recent activities & Upcoming opportunities

Some fantastic events have occurred across our coastal region in recent months. Here is a short summary, along with new activities to become involved in:

Water and Country Art Exhibition

Congratulations to all artists and community members that contributed to the CMA's recent 'Water and Country Art exhibition'. This highly successful event saw around 100 community members treated to a display of amazing Aboriginal art and local artist creations depicting a Water and Country theme.

Clean-up Australia Day 2018 – this weekend

Community Clean-up Australia Day kicks off this weekend. A range of events occurring throughout our region, including a CMA event on the picturesque Fitzroy River estuary, Tyrendarra. *Please refer to the Fitzroy River estuary attachment for more details, or follow this link to find your closest event. <https://www.cleanupaustraliaday.org.au/>*

Coastal Connections by Jarred Obst.

Mulloway Tagging Program by NGT

Nature Glenelg Trust are urging anglers to be on the lookout for tagged mulloway, as their new tagging project gets under way across Victoria.

This research aims to learn more about the connectivity and movement patterns of mulloway, while strengthening the population and biological knowledge of this iconic species.

For information, please contact Lauren Veale lauren.veale@ngt.org.au or follow this <http://natureglenelg.org.au/our-mulloway-tagging-project-is-off-to-a-great-start/>

Art Exhibition '6600+ An exploration of the Budj Bim landscape'

The Warrnambool Art Gallery is currently hosting a fantastic exhibition by artist Sam Leach which I'd encourage all interested persons to attend. This exhibition promotes the Budj Bim landscape and aims to create opportunities for audiences to learn more about this sacred and significant site.

For more information, please follow this <http://www.thewag.com.au/exhibition/6600>

Belfast Coastal Reserve Management Plan

Parks Victoria is currently seeking community feedback on the draft management plan, aimed to protect and enhance the Belfast Coastal Reserve. Feedback closes Friday 16 March; please follow this link to become involved <https://engage.vic.gov.au/belfast>

Lastly, after a long battle with illness, the Nelson and wider community recently farewelled a true environment champion of our region, Leila Huebner OAM. Leila was a unique person, whose knowledge, energy and dedication towards ecological literacy can be a lesson for us all. Please refer to this short online video, [*Environmental Champion Leila Huebner*](#), if you'd like to learn more about this amazing lady. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UVDh8vVI78>

All the best until my next instalment,

Regards