



Australian Plants Society Ballarat District

Newsletter – April 2021

**MONTHLY MEETINGS ON THE 2ND WEDNESDAY
at ROBERT CLARK HOTICULTURAL CENTRE
GILLIES STREET ENTRANCE – GATE 3 or 4**

FURTHER DETAILS SEE INFORMATION BOX

COMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAY - 14th APRIL

MONTHLY MEETING

→ **NOTE: *Day Meeting at 2pm***

VENUE - The Robert Clark Horticultural Centre - Ballarat Botanical Gardens

GUEST SPEAKER - Donna Thomas – ‘Ballarat Botanical Gardens Indigenous Plant Conservation Project’

COVID-19 rules will apply! Masks must be carried but need not be worn! Contact details must be given! There will be a raffle but no Afternoon Tea.

THURSDAY - 22nd APRIL 2021 - Excursion

Visit Birdsong Nursery & Gardens, 9 Baglin Street, Smythesdale

Drive yourself or get a lift from someone or offer a lift to someone. Afternoon Tea will be served at 2.30pm. Afternoon Tea will be catered, so I must know how many will be attending. Please e-mail or phone 53415567 and leave a message before the 20th April.

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY BALLARAT DISTRICT

WINTER 2021 NATIVE PLANT SHOW

June 26th and 27th

***Friday 25th June, 2021 – Set-up for APS**

Ballarat District Winter Flower Show, 11am-3pm. All Members are asked to get involved, the most important job is to bring along as many flowers as you can, with labels clearly marked with the name of the flower. Help set-up tables, put flowers in bottles, and on tables for display etc.

*** Sat 26th & Sun 27th, June *** 10am-4pm. Check to make sure everything is as it should be, talk to our visitors. Depending what virus restrictions are in place, it may be required to help with numbers, social distancing, checking in (name & phone no), and just keeping a quiet eye on things in general. Closing at 4.00pm. Help with the clean-up.



A Little Pied Cormorant rests on a planted eucalypt just metres above the water at Pauls Wetland as seen at last month's Bird and Plant Walk with Roger Thomas. Photo: Elspeth Swan. (See report page 4.)

APS PLANT SHOWS and SALES

Saturday 17th April, 2021 – APS Geelong Native Plant Sale

‘Wirrawilla’, 40 Lovely Banks Road, Lovely Banks – 8.30am-4.00pm

Saturday 8th May, 2021 – APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale

St. Andrews Church, Bacchus Marsh (venue to be confirmed) 9.00am-1.00pm

APS BALLARAT DISTRICT GROUP PROGRAM FROM APRIL/SEPTEMBER, 2021

(There will be additions as time goes on) Reminder – Covid safe rules do apply!

Wednesday 12th May, 2021- Monthly General Meeting at the Robert Clark Centre at 2.00pm

Guest Speaker- Peter Rogers – “Outback Queensland, from Winton through to 3 Ways in the Northern Territory”. A mixture of Birds & Plants.

Wednesday 9th June, 2021 – Monthly General Meeting at the Robert Clark Centre at 2pm

There will be no Guest Speaker this month. Winter Flower Show discussion

Wednesday 14th July, 2021 – Monthly General Meeting, Robert Clark Centre, 2pm

Guest Speaker - Chris Clark, APS Vic President, ‘The High Country Alpine Plants’ (to be confirmed).

Wednesday 11th August, 2021 – Monthly General Meeting at the Robert Clark Centre at 2.00pm

Guest Speaker - Kevin Ritchie – ‘Bonsai with Australian Natives’

Wednesday 8th September, 2021 – Annual General Meeting at the Robert Clark Centre at 2.00pm followed by the Monthly General Meeting. There will be no Guest Speaker this month.

MARCH MEETING

The President and Treasurers reports were accepted. **The Group still needs a Secretary! Please offer to help the group.** A motion to have a Facebook page was approved.

PLEASE NOTE: ‘Australian Plants Society Ballarat District’ is now active on Facebook.

MARCH GUEST SPEAKER - Elspeth Swan – ‘Bee Homes and Nest Boxes’

Report: Ainslie Whyte

As a result of diseases and the clearing of suitable habitat, Australia is facing a loss of many pollinators vital to plants. Gardeners can play their part by providing a wide range of plants, and an overall habitat (food, water, shelter) supportive to birds and insects.

Bee Homes

Elspeth outlined some points to take into account when purchasing a “bee hotel” or constructing a home for native bees.

*There needs to be a collection of horizontal cylindrical spaces for the bees to fly into, for example pieces of bamboo or drilled wood blocks.

*If there are spiders or webs the bees won’t come, so the holes need to be the right size, 3-10mm in diameter and up to 110mm deep.

*Don’t use any chemically treated materials.

*Site the bee home facing northeast, up off the ground, and a bit protected from the weather.

*Some important native bee pollinators are ground dwellers, so leave a patch of bare earth in the garden. The Australian Native Bee Research Centre’s Aussie Bee website has a detailed and useful section on bee hotels: aussiebee.com.au/bee-hotel-introduction.html

Nest Boxes

Over 60% of mammals and 15% of birds require hollows for nesting. Habitat is continually being lost as trees with suitable hollows (70 years old or more) are cleared for development. Nest boxes can provide an alternative nest site, and should be designed for the particular requirements of the intended inhabitant; for example, size and angle of the hole, ease of exit for the young bird or mammal, will protection from predators be necessary. Nest boxes fixed to trees need to be on the southeast side to provide shade in summer, attached at a height where you can easily check the box using your own ladder!

Useful resources on nest boxes: Federation University website includes downloadable pdf patterns suitable for a variety of mammals and birds, and a very detailed booklet about nest boxes – just google federation university nest boxes.

Books include: Nest Boxes for Wildlife by Alan and Stacey Franks, and The Nest Box Book by the Gould Group.

VALE

LIZ BOWDEN

Our well liked and appreciated member Liz passed recently. Respect was observed for our member and office bearer Liz Bowden at the March meeting. The group sends condolences to Family and Friends.

SPECIMENS EXHIBITED AT MARCH MEETING

The President also notes: If you are bringing specimens, please also provide a list so that a record of your specimens can appear in the Newsletter!

Giveaway plants were the highlight, to take away and grow on.

The Dalmans showed a Kangaroo Paw Clump, White Vanilla Lillies, *Eremophila*.

The Cadorets showed a Blackwood.

Jenny West showed *Baeckea*, *Lobiellia*, *Hibbertia*, *Crowea*.

THE GARDEN AT ELAINE

As autumn comes the range of plants in flower changes. The *eremophilas*, *xerochrysums*

and *croweas* continue to provide colour. The groundcover *Eremophila debilis* (or Winter

Apple) has produced many of its small ‘apple-like’ fruits. *E. calorhabdos* and *E.*

‘Summertime Blue’ and other *eremophilas* are still providing food for the honeyeaters.

With the above average summer rain, growth has been far more than normal, so much pruning has been needed. *Melaleucas*, *Kunzias* and *Callistemons* have semi-ripe wood that can be used for cuttings.

A few plants are flowering out of season: this includes *correas*, *epacris* and *callistemons*.

The snow gum, *eucalyptus pauciflora*, a local species, is shedding its bark so now has a grey and white mottled trunk. Elaine is not cold enough to cause the tree to produce the colours seen in alpine trees.



Fruit on *Austromyrtus dulcis*, planted by Sue Ring two years ago. And this after she was ‘told’ that it wouldn’t produce any. It appears the protection she provided did the trick. “Not quite as tasty as the *Kunzea pomifera*, but fun to have.”



Goodenia ovata, Hop Goodenia, in the garden of Bruce Cadoret and Alison Everingham.

WESTERN VICTORIA TRANSMISSION PROJECT

Most of us will not be directly affected by this proposed high voltage electricity transmission line but it will probably affect some areas of importance in native plant conservation. These areas include Creswick State Forest, Werribee Gorge State Park, Lerderderg State Park, Mt. Beckworth and Mt. Bolton. If you wish to find out more about the project the official website is www.westvictnp.com.au. The protest group details are Western Victoria Power Alliance. clarkeshill@outlook.com kngston3364@mail.com and www.stopausnetstowers.com.au. Thanks to Bernadette for alerting us to this.



Constructed Sedgy Wetland, one of the bird-habitat types in Pauls Wetland, venue of the Bird and Plant Walk.
Photo: Elspeth Swan

MARCH EXCURSION REPORT

Annual Bird and Plant Walk with Roger Thomas

Venue – Pauls Wetland

Edited from Roger Thomas's Nature Notes, Ballarat Courier, 19th March.

“Wendouree wetland a haven for many birds.

Situated in Dowling St Wendouree, Paul’s wetland was constructed at the start of 2003.

Less than four hectares in size, it is surrounded by suburbia, which continues to develop around its edges.

Its main purpose is water collection and diversion.

But it has also been planned for wildlife, successfully filling a useful and appreciated role as a wetland for waterbirds and other aquatic wildlife, as well as for native plants.

Most of the trees, shrubs and rushes growing there are indigenous to the Ballarat region.

They provide suitable cover for numerous birds.

The total number of birds on the list for Paul’s Wetlands is about 80 species. A dozen or more can usually be found on any visit.

The current wetland reserve is not quite on the site of the original swampy drainage line that became ‘Paul’s Drain’ as nearby developments increased.”

Thanks to Elspeth Swan for posting this to our Facebook page with several good pictures.

“About 16 members came to our bird excursion. The wind was very cool and it really felt like autumn had arrived. We are fortunate that Roger Thomas, noted local naturalist, leads these excursions for us. First stop was Paul’s Wetland in Dowling Street, Wendouree, then onto the North Gardens Wetlands. Both wetlands are not natural, but fulfill an important niche for the local fauna, while filtering and regulating storm water flows. About 36 species were observed including a startled possum. The anticipated tawny frogmouth was not seen but all up it was a lovely morning looking at mostly local plants and birds.”

Thanks to Roger Thomas and Fon Ryan for a very interesting, informative and enjoyable excursion.

(See next page for bird tally.)



Dusky Moorhen photographed on the excursion.

Photo: Elspeth Swan



The Possum

Photo: Elspeth Swan

THE BIRD TALLY

Pacific Black Duck
Little Black Cormorant
Purple Swamphen
Eurasian Coot
Masked Lapwing (heard)
White-faced Heron
Magpie-lark
Australian Magpie
Welcome Swallow
Superb Fairy-wren
Black Swan
Dusky Moorhen
Grey Teal
Grey Fantail
Brown Thornbill (heard)
Crimson Rosella
New Holland Honeyeater
Galah
White Ibis
Hardhead (duck)
Hoary-headed Grebe
Wood Duck
Red Wattlebird
House Sparrow
Silver Gull
Little Pied Cormorant
Long-billed Corella
Silvereye
Common Blackbird
Common Starling
Crested Pigeon
Grey Butcherbird
Australasian Grebe
Little Raven
Pied Currawong
A good tally of 35 species

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT MEETING

The COM decided that membership fees will remain the same in 21/22 as they were this year. Half price membership for people who join at a Show is to be continued.

The next COM meeting is a one-day event in Shepparton in June. It will include garden visits. The September COM meeting will coincide with the 40th Anniversary of the Grampians Group so a weekend, or more, is being planned.

The 14th. F J C Rogers Seminar on 'Fabulous Peas' will be hosted by APS Maroondah on 15th and 16th October 2022.

BOOK REVIEW - by John Hastie

The latest edition of Kevin Sparrow's 'Plants of the Great South West' was launched at the recent weekend in Warrnambool. This is a much-expanded version of the book originally published in 2004 with a second edition in 2013.

For each species the information given includes size, flowering time, habitat, a general description and propagation methods.

Although this book is about plants found within 20 km. of the coast in South –West Victoria it is still useful for use in a wider area of the state.

All types of plants are covered: large trees, small trees, shrubs, herbs, orchids, sedges, grasses, aquatic plants and ferns.

The book is published by APS Warrnambool and District Group, Inc.

A copy will be added to our library.



APS Ballarat District members back together again on an excursion!

The Bird and Plant Walk on March 14th saw members together on an excursion after the Covid restrictions brought activities to a halt just after the March meeting of 2020. *Photo: Elspeth Swan*

Thanks to all those who contributed reports or items for this issue

Deadline for May Newsletter: 28th April 2021



AFTERNOON TEA or SUPPER

Members, please have a cuppa at home for arvo tea or supper

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY BALLARAT DISTRICT INC. Incorporation No. A0013127M

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Treasurer: Ainslie Whyte PO Box 123W Ballarat West 3350
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MONTHLY MEETINGS

The **SECOND WEDNESDAY** in October, November, December, February, March, at 7-30pm

The **SECOND WEDNESDAY** in April, May, June, July, August, September at 2-00pm

MEETING VENUE

ROBERT CLARK HORTICULTURAL CENTRE, Ballarat Botanical Gardens

Access: GILLIES St. ENTRANCE – GATE 3 or 4 (or from Wendouree Parade, **Afternoon Meetings only**)

CORRESPONDENCE

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NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTIONS

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