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Kangaroo Grass
AUSTRALIAN PLANTS
SOCIETY
BALLARAT DISTRICT

Australian Plants Society Ballarat District Newsletter – March 2022

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

FURTHER DETAILS SEE INFORMATION BOX

COMING EVENTS

**WEDNESDAY 9th MARCH 2022 – 6 PM –
MONTHLY MEETING**

➔ **NOTE: Evening Meeting at 6.00pm** ←

**Everyone to check in with QR code or APS
tablet – wear mask – vaccination certificate
At Janine O'Malley's Home and Garden, 12
Koala Court, Smythes Creek**

(The Robert Clark Centre is unavailable).

Directions: From Hertford Street, Sebastopol, go south in Tait Street to Crown Street (Bonshaw), veer right to Sebastopol/Ross Creek Road. From Sebastopol/Ross Creek Road turn right into Shamus Drive. At the end of Shamus Drive turn right into Jolly's Hill Road then immediately turn left into Koala Court. No.12 is on the right, the driveway is along the bank of the dam. If required ring Janine 0417 134 320. Bring a chair and mug. Please drive through the hedge opening and park behind it so as not to block others.

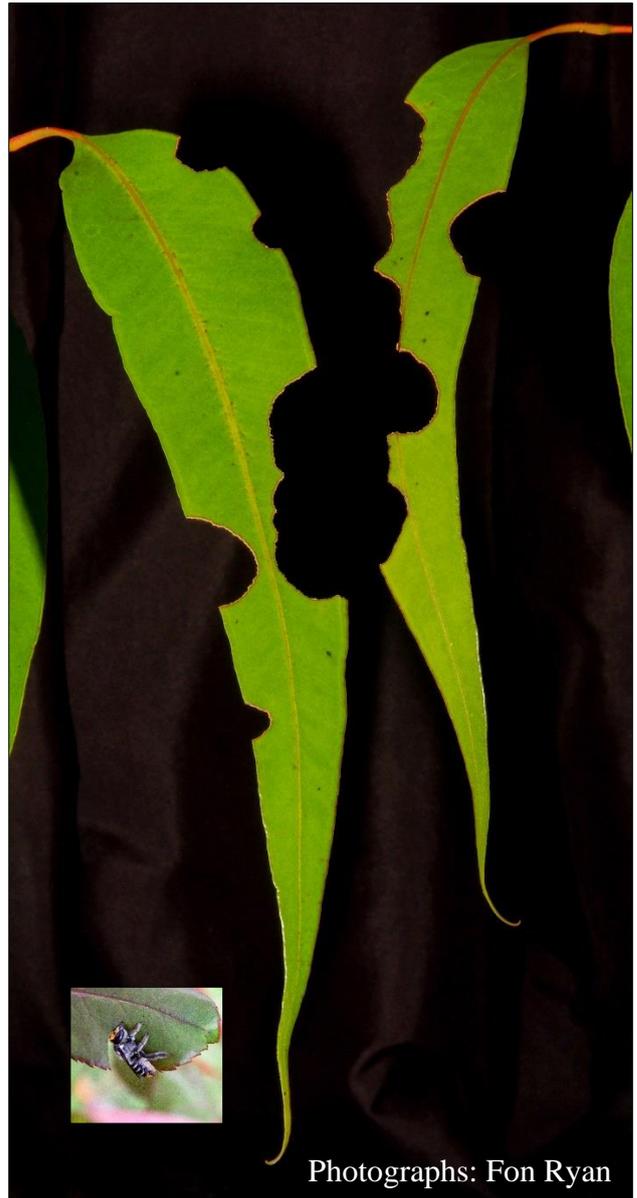
SUNDAY 27th MARCH 2022 – EXCURSION

(Covid rules apply; sign in, vaccinated, mask)

Joint venture between APS Ballarat District Group and Ross Creek Landcare Group.

BYO BBQ/Lunch from 11:30 am at Janine O'Malley's home and garden. (Directions as for meeting, above,) **then onto, Ross Creek Community Hall, Sebastopol-Smythesdale Rd, Ross Creek, meet at 1:30 pm.**

Walk and talk around the reserve, looking at what the Ross Creek Landcare group have done with the creek and wetland area and a power point presentation by Ballarat Goldfields Little Creek Restoration Strategy Group. The reserve and hall are on the Sebastopol/Smythesdale Road beside the local general store. Janine has a copy of the Ballarat Goldfields Little Creeks Restoration Strategy Document for those interested, it can be emailed to them.



Photographs: Fon Ryan

These leaves are the 'victim' of the Gold-tipped Leafcutter Bee. Full story, see Page 3.

APS Ballarat District Group – Activities

Suggestions for group activities are requested and welcomed; Talks, Walks, Guest Speakers, Excursions, etc., indeed, anything of interest for the Group. Please let us know!

Library – APS Ballarat District

We are gradually sorting out books in our library. A very basic borrowing system will be in place. There are some books that have not been returned and this may be due to the covid lockdowns etc. Of particular notice are two books ‘Smaller Eucalypts for Planting in Australian Gardens’ and ‘Taller Eucalypts for Planting in Australian Gardens’ both written by Dean Nicolle. Any member who has books out and are finding it difficult to return them, please phone Gladys on 53415567 and we can arrange to pick them up.

APS BALLARAT DISTRICT FLOWER SHOWS 2022

The APS Ballarat District Winter Flower Show will be held 25th & 26th June 2022.

The APS Ballarat District Spring Flower Show will be held 15th & 16th October 2022.

With negotiation! We now have a ten-year tenure on these times of the year to hold our Shows!

Our WINTER SHOW will be the last weekend of June, and

Our SPRING SHOW will be the third weekend of October.

Biosecurity in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens

The details of use of The Robert Clark Centre were outlined in the February Newsletter and discussed at the February meeting again and protocols observed. We can operate from the Centre and must follow the guidelines.

The Garden at Elaine in February

So far this month we have had 3mm of rain: we usually have between 30 and 40 mm. There were a couple of good falls in January so the soil was reasonably damp at the start of the month. As the month has gone on, some of the broad leaf plants like the Victorian Christmas Bush, *Prostanthera lasianthos*, have suffered. I hope the occasional bucket of water has stopped them reaching ‘permanent wilting point’. Some plants grew extremely well in January so a great deal of pruning was needed. Some of the pruned material was suitable for cuttings. The small-leaved melaleucas *Melaleuca thymifolia* and *M. pulchella* (Claw Flower) have been flowering well in the warm weather. *Alyogyne hakeaefolia* is a mass of pale yellow flowers and the pink *A. huegelii* is also doing well. The eremophilas are living up to their name (Desert Lover). The tall narrow *E. calorhabdos* always has its pink flowers. *E. weldii* is a ‘bushy’ small shrub with blue flowers for long periods. The larger eremophila cultivars, including a nivea hybrid, have kept the New Holland Honeyeaters in nectar. The xerochrysums continue to give colour to the garden, particularly in the ‘new’ garden along the former laneway.

February Meeting Specimens exhibited (We were able to meet at The Robert Clark Centre.)

Ruth Marton; *Melaleuca lateritia*, *Grevillea* ‘Gaudi Chaudii’, *Beaufortia orbifolia*, *Alyogyne* ‘Blue Heeler’, *Grevillea longistyla*

The Hasties; *Acacia implexa* (Lightwood), *Westringea glabra*, *Westringea crassifolia*, *Xerochrysum* sp., *Prostanthera calycina* (Red Mint Bush), *Banksia marginata*, *Pandorea jasminoides*, *Goodenia viscida*, *Goodenia ovata*, *Prostanthera ovalifolia*, *Prostanthera rotundifolia*, *Prostanthera incisa*, *Anigozanthus flavidus*, *Halgania presii*

February Bird and Plant Walk with Roger Thomas

Roger Thomas guided our group on a warm and windblown Sunday morning around the ponds in Victoria Park, then the isthmus and Olympic Rings precinct at Lake Wendouree.

We discussed the environments and activities taking place.

In particular observing the Bird and Plant life. Many terrestrial and aquatic species were noted.

With our great guide Roger and an interested group, it was very informative and entertaining.

A bonus was the *Corymbia ficifolia* ‘Vermilion Blaze’ specimen, in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, grafted by Fon Ryan, who gave us great information of this spectacular plant and species.

Our group regards this annual excursion very highly and thanks Roger very much!

See Bird List on next page

The Gold-tipped Leafcutter Bee

The Gold-tipped Leafcutter bee is a solitary native insect that uses tender leaves – especially those of roses – to cut pieces from and carry back to its nest. It binds together lots of these pieces into a tube, which acts as a nest for the young bees. Nests can be in any tubular hole. The nest is stocked with nectar and pollen, and several eggs are laid within.

The dry pollen is carried on the bristles under the abdomen.

The scientific name for the Gold-tipped Leafcutter Bee is *Megachile chrysopyga*.

The above information supplied by Roger Thomas

THE BIRD TALLY

(from page 2)

Pacific Black Duck
Little Black Cormorant
Purple Swamphen
Masked Lapwing
Magpie-lark
Australian Magpie
Black Swan
Dusky Moorhen (+ 4 chicks)
White Ibis
Wood Duck
Red Wattlebird
Silver Gull
Little Pied Cormorant
Long-billed Corella
Common Blackbird
Crested Pigeon
Grey Butcherbird (heard)
Little Raven
Eastern Rosella
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Musk Duck (+ 2 ducklings)
Common Bronzewing
Released domestic ducks
A tally of 23 species



Photograph: Fon Ryan

A female Gold-tipped Leafcutter Bee cutting a near-circular piece from a soft immature rose leaf. It is about 1/3 of the way around the cut, and in this case, just missed the mid-vein of the leaf. Its 3 legs on its left side (not in view) are already rolling and holding the piece being cut off. When the cut is completed its 3 legs on its right side (the ones on view) will hold this side. It then flies to the nest-hole carrying the piece rolled as a tube between its legs (in a horizontal position).

Its strong mandibles, I am sure, took less than 10 seconds to complete the job. It then flew a short distance to a hole in mortar in brickwork.

These bees are about as long as a honey bee (15mm approx.), but as can be seen in the photo, are much stockier.

But this story is about native plants as well. Presumably this leafcutter bee, and not another one, also cut pieces from some of the soft immature leaves on a nearby potted *Corymbia maculata*.

When this photo was taken, 3 weeks later, the leaves had grown a bit and hardened up.

Neither the rose, nor the *Corymbia*, were affected by the leaf-cutting, but a nursery retailer may not be too happy presenting roses and *Corymbias* looking thus.

Fon Ryan



See full-size photo on page 1



Photo: Sue Ring

Sue Ring wrote: Fascinating creepy crawlies, seemed to gather to sleep in a sheltered corner of this gum tree whose name I have forgotten – just having a bit of a stretch before breakfast – the wigglers I mean – around-mid-December – if anyone knows what they will metamorphose into would be fun, first time in 18 years that I have seen them. **Answer:** These are the larvae of Eucalyptus Leaf Beetles. We had a photo and a short story on them in this newsletter about 6 years ago. They were 11mm long. Four hours after that photo was taken, the cluster of caterpillars had consumed the whole of the leaf they had been on!

Thanks to those who contributed reports or items for this issue

Deadline for April Newsletter
30th March 2022

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY BALLARAT DISTRICT INC. Incorporation No. A0013127M

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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**))

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WEB: (APS Vic): www.apsvic.org.au Then go to APS Ballarat District page



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