



APS Bendigo
Growing Australian Plants

Australian Plants Society Bendigo

April 2023 Newsletter

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Reg. No. A0014487F **Facebook** - "APS Bendigo - Growing Australian Plants"

*We are a district group of Australian Plants Society - Victoria
and Bendigo membership requires membership of APSVIC*

Greetings!

What a month it has been in APS Land! Firstly, we had a great March meeting with guest speaker Mike Williams talking about a trip down the road from Norseman to Lake King in WA. BUT don't go looking for an article - I ain't done it yet!!! Next month dear readers . . . next month.

Also in March we had a display at the Bendigo Sustainability Festival and wasn't it a wonderful day! Lots of members came and helped, other members came and admired as did heaps of interested visitors at the Festival. Then, for two days, I had the pleasure of attending MIFGS (Melb. International Flower and Garden Show) as a volunteer on the APSVIC info stand. Lexi - another of our members - also helped out. And 'My' we were busy. So we have lots of new members to welcome including those who joined at and after our Flower Show last September - not sure how I managed to forget mentioning them previously. We hope you all enjoy being part of our group. On a sadder note, some may remember Wim Janssen, a gentle soul who only managed to come to a few excursions and Flower Shows. Sadly he died, peacefully, a couple of weeks ago. Our thoughts are with those who loved him. And what's the latest on my young *Eucalyptus erythrocorys* 'Red Capped Gum', 'Illyarrie'. Just look at those red caps getting redder! Nearly time to start holding my breath as I wait for the golden flowers!!
- see you on Tuesday, Sandy



7.30 pm Tuesday 18 April 2023

"Butterflies and Ants"

Julie Radford

And please bring lots of specimens too!

Sales Table

Sell home propagated, labelled, Aussie plants in good condition; books etc. 10% of \$ to group (up to \$20)

Supper: Marg and Joe van Dillon

To attend Meeting you must:

consider wearing a mask - be in good health

NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING - 13 June, 2023 .

So Who's New?

(or returning after a break!)

From our 2022 Flower Show

Helen B, Mark B, Matthew B & Kristen R, Harry C,
Graham & Lindy C, Tara C, Dale C, Anne F,
Rob H, Lesley H, Helen H,
Michelle H, William H, Ray H, Lindsay J,
Evan K, Gill & Greg McM, Francine N,
Kerry N, Lidia R, Pat S, Karen S, Shona T,
and Liesje W.

From the Bendigo Sustainability Festival

Murene C, Rod C, Ann C, Ian & Nancy C, Jessie D,
Fran & Jim F, Barbara H, Peta H,
Noni H, Cassandra L, Margaret M, Skye McD,
Steph O'C, Kristine P, Helen R, Ros S,
Colleen S, Karen W, and George W.

From MIFGS

Rosemary & John S,
Mick T with Anna, Will and Saskia!

And those who just found us on-line!!

Graham S, and Andrew T.
(Di D, Holly A, and Nicholas D got a mention last month!)

We hope you enjoy being part of our group. Remember that you can get up to 50 packs of free seed each year, books at well below retail, discounts at some nurseries, and amazing deals on some fertilizers from Neutrog.

Apart from that you can come to meetings and excursions, and also attend any other APS meeting or event in Australia!

Meetings are held at the Forest St Church Hall, 21 Forest St. Bendigo, (opposite City Centre Motel)
on the third Tuesday of each month from February to November. The hall is open from 7.00 p.m.

The Woolly Wattles of Mandurang

By Eric Wilkinson

From late April to July people driving along Diamond Hill Rd and Hollidays Rd at Mandurang will see small shrubby wattles with bright golden flowerheads lighting up the bush. They are Woolly Wattles, which have the scientific name of *Acacia lanigera* variety *whanii*. There are a few other small occurrences in Kangaroo Gully and at Spring Gully, but the best place to view this wattle is along Diamond Hill Rd, between its junction with Kangaroo Gully Rd and Hollidays Rd. There are places on the south side of the road where you can pull a car well off Diamond Hill Rd, and then walk and look at these wattles safely. They extend quite a way into the bush to the south.



A typical 'golden-flowered form.'

They are small to medium sized shrubs, with fairly rigid upright branches fanning out to create a rounded appearance. The local forms rarely exceed a metre in height, but it can apparently reach two metres elsewhere. The grey-green phyllodes are linear lanceolate, flat, slightly curved in outline, taper to a sharp point and are from 2.5 to 4 cm in length, and from 4 to 8 mm wide. They have up to six strong parallel veins, distinctly raised, which may have reticulation between them. In the typical variety of New South Wales the phyllodes are covered in hairs, especially when young, and are whitish in appearance. However, woolly is not an entirely appropriate adjective for the variety *whanii*, because magnification is needed to see the very fine hairs on the branchlets and phyllodes, although the seed pods (*below*) are more obviously slightly hairy.



The flowerheads are generally brilliant golden yellow, but paler lemon yellow flowered forms (*above*) can be found amongst the golden ones. The flowerheads are of small to medium size, with about 25 flowers per flowerhead. The buds are ovoid, but the flowerheads are globular. They are borne singly, or in pairs, or in clusters of four in the axils, close to the branchlets, on short thickish peduncles (stalks). In the Bendigo area it used to be regarded as a winter flowering wattle. Flowers appeared in late May and continued into August, with peak flowering in June and July. In recent years it has been flowering about a month earlier, starting in late April and continuing to July, with peak flowering in late May and June. The pods which follow the flowers are much twisted in shape, and covered in woolly hairs in the type form. The pods are from 5 to 8 cm in length, and up to 6 to 8 mm wide, and only slightly constricted between the longitudinally elongated seeds.

There is an interesting taxonomic story behind the fact that the variety name *whanii* was introduced in 1914, but was largely ignored until 1995. Alan Cunningham described a new species of *Acacia* in 1825, based on a specimen from near Bathurst, New South Wales. He gave it the specific name of *lanigera*, which means 'woolly', based on the fact that the branchlets, phyllodes and seed pods were very hairy, especially the pods.

In 1864 Baron von Mueller described a new species of *Acacia*, based on a specimen collected at Linton, SW of Ballarat, by William Whan. It had similarities to *Acacia lanigera* but von Mueller thought it different enough to warrant its own species name. He gave it the specific name of *whanii*, in honour of the collector, Irish born William Whan, who was the minister at the Skipton Presbyterian Church from 1860 to 1884. He was an amateur botanist who collected material for von Mueller.

In 1914 Edward Pescott placed *Acacia whanii* in synonymy with *Acacia lanigera*, but considered it to be sufficiently different to be treated as variety *whanii*, distinguished by being not nearly so obviously hairy as the typical species of New South Wales. In 1923 the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria published a first *List of the Vascular Plants of Victoria* in which they accepted Pescott's synonymy, and listed the Woolly Wattles of Victoria as *Acacia lanigera*. Mueller's name of *Acacia whanii* was placed in a section listing species erroneously recorded from Victoria. They did not adopt Pescott's variety name. As a result the Woolly Wattles of Victoria were recorded as *Acacia lanigera* by various authors until Richard Cowan and Bruce Maslin formally split *Acacia lanigera* into three varieties in 1995.

They set up variety *lanigera* for the typical form of Central and Western New South Wales, re-established Pescott's trinomial of *Acacia lanigera* var *whanii* for the Woolly Wattles of Central and Eastern Victoria, and set up a new taxon of *Acacia lanigera* var *gracilipes* for a form from far eastern Victoria and southernmost New South Wales.

It is the variety *whanii* which grows at Mandurang. As noted above it is not as obviously hairy as the type variety *lanigera*, which occurs from Northeastern Victoria to northern New South Wales. Its distribution within Victoria is from the Ballarat area east to Licola in Gippsland. It occurs in the Castlemaine and Fryers Ranges areas to our south. Mandurang and Spring Gully are the northernmost occurrences of this variety in this area. Until a few years ago there was a small roadside occurrence at Sedgwick, on the road to Sutton Grange, but these shrubs were obliterated by road workers clearing vegetation. It is possible that there was seed which might germinate in the right conditions.

The Bendigo Field Naturalists Club's 1988 book *Wildflowers of Bendigo* did not include Woolly Wattle. The first edition of the *Indigenous Plants of Bendigo* of 2004 did, but used the name *Acacia lanigera*. In the second and third editions of 2007 and 2013 the name was updated to *Acacia lanigera* var *whanii*. It is an attractive small shrub to include in a garden. A drive out to Diamond Hill Rd in May and June will be rewarded by views of this small shrubby wattle in flower.



Excursion Catch-ups!

For various reasons we had no reports about two excursions last year so here's what we did. The first was to Kamarooka on Saturday 6 August, 2022 where, after navigating some wonderful water-filled canyons (!) on the dirt road, we visited Noel Ruedin's historic eucalyptus distillery which was established in 1925. While at Uni Noel earned money by helping to run the distillery up until it closed in 1976.



Noel's grandparents set up the still on what was 'Soldier Settlement' land. Both Grandfather and Grandmother were eligible so they claimed adjoining allotments. It didn't take long to work out that the land was not suited to general farming and as Eucalyptus Oil was becoming a valued commodity they started the growing and distilling business.

Grandfather was an innovator. The standard harvesting method was to burn the crop then cut the re-sprouting plants for steaming to extract the oil. It was hard work and very dirty. Rather than burn he invented a roller to flatten the saplings and break them at the base so that fresh growth would emerge. *Roller now and then.*



Flattened sapling with fresh new growth sprouting.

He also developed a unique axe that was far quicker and easier to use for cutting the young plants. *Noel with axe.*

After the guided tour of the wonderful relics we had a picnic lunch then walked through the blue and green mallee scrub which was farmed for oil and on to a gully with bull mallee and yellow gums.



A highlight along the way was seeing a well-hidden Mallee Fowl nest that was last used 90 years ago. It was huge and believed to be about the biggest known. Noel's grandparents well remembered the birds from that nest and many more. Sadly, a fire wiped out the population.



As we wandered around there were few flowers to see but had we been then at another time of year there would have been a myriad of blooms. But we did find a miniature field of moss and sundews in a small boggy area, the teeniest of Earth Stars pictured here beside a pocket knife for scale, and one of the 300+ species of Greenhood Orchids which was doing it's best to not be seen! There were other tiny treasures that just didn't co-operate with basic cameras!!



In all the day was a great adventure and the is no way the casual passer-by would ever find the mallee fowl nest. And in case you try - just remember that the Eucy set-up is now on Parks land and is protected but the nest is on Noel's private land. If we are lucky he will take us out there again.

Now to Newstead! In early September 2022 we visited Frances Cincotta who runs 'Newstead Natives' at 4 Palmerston St, Newstead - a lovely nursery specializing in local plants but with a few ring-ins. Her property is tucked into the side of a hill just on the outskirts of town. We were greeted with morning tea and had to halt the rush to the sales area so that she could give us a tour of the complex. We nearly had to have mountain goat genes but it was very do-able. We admired the green houses bursting with tiny seedlings - pretty sure she uses heat mats from the aquarium shop as they are much cheaper than those sold for the nursery trade. And, hint, now is the best time of year to visit and buy plants for your garden. We then meandered around lots of areas where plants were growing to saleable size and finished in the public area where members snapped up treasures right left and centre!



After leaving Frances' we had lunch at the Newstead Arts Hub and admired an exhibition, then went to Roger McKindley's 'Antares Iron Art Garden'! What a bonkers adventure that was!! He collects scrap of any kind and makes the most wonderful whatever's!! Here's his house and while it looks like a junk heap, when you see it close up it is a myriad of hysterically funny artworks. The paddocks surrounding the house were like visiting a crazy art gallery.



March Specimen Table

Di arrived in Bendigo from Melbourne in June 2022 and inherited a very formal exotic garden. Much to the dismay of others she's ripped most things out and the natives are going in. She's very proud of *Correa* 'Canberra Bells' which has very large red flowers with canary yellow tips. It is a low growing tough semi-groundcover and was the official plant of Canberra's 2013 Centenary celebrations.

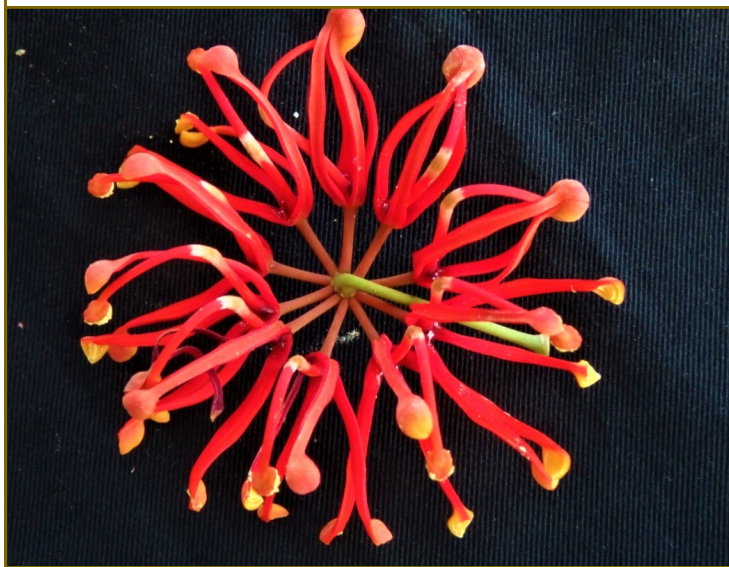


Marilyn's *Grevillea* 'Caloundra Gem' is a large tropical hybrid with silver leaves and big pale pink terminal flowers. Not 'dead' terminal but growing on the terminals (ends) of the branches! It is grafted onto *G. robusta* rootstock and planted in rocky clay. Robusta doesn't grow well at her place but put in a very well drained high spot it is doing really well. She does water but suspects the really good drainage does the trick. It won't come true from seeds - it has to be grafted - and it's always being pruned as she sells lots of the cut flowers. (Hint - come to our May meeting to hear Marilyn talk about growing for the cut flower industry!)



Stenocarpus sinuatus 'Firewheel Tree' is from the northern rainforests. In 2014 Ian planted his in a 40ltr pot when it was only 1.6m tall. As it grew he planted it out and it is now about 3m tall. He told us that it hardly ever stops flowering and is not affected by frosts down to -2°.

There are some really old ones in Bendigo including one in the old section of the Botanic Gardens. Considering it's age it is not that tall while a tree at Fortuna Villa is as high as the second storey. Looking at the large fire-red wheel-shaped flowers it's easy to see how the common name was derived. Interestingly, the complex new flowers start the day as a soft orange and as the day progresses the colour deepens to the fiery red. The leaves also make a statement as they are very large and glossy.



Ptilotus exaltatus
'Pink Mulla Mulla'
is widespread
through WA, SA,
and Vic.

It can be found
growing on the
plains just out from
Bendigo and likes
well drained soil.
The feathery white
flowers tipped with
hot pink make a
valued addition to
flower
arrangements. Di
thought she had lost
them this year and
then, out of
nowhere, lots of
seeds sprouted. A
few of our members
grow them. Ian has
a smaller form but
he has protect it
from rabbits.



Brachychiton albidus - Ian told us that this small tree
normally drops all its leaves and then bears lovely red
flowers from mid-November to Christmas but with this
strange weather pattern it is still flowering in March, as is his
Flame Tree. Due to the current late flowering Ian expects
that when flowers finally finish and the young leaves sprout
that the frosts will kill them off. Sigh!



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A bit of unashamed advertising for our members

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members and generously support our group so don't forget
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APS BENDIGO DIARY 2023

Tues 16 May 7.30pm - Marilyn Sprague
Growing Natives for Cut Flowers

Tues 20 June 7.30pm - Neil Marriott
Endemic Plants of the Grampians

Tues 18 July 7.30pm - Tools and Tool Care

Tues 15 Aug 7.30pm Mark Hall (CoGB) - Pollinators

Tues 19 Sept 7.30pm - Big Specimen Identification Night

23 & 24 Sept Our Flower Show (just getting in early!)

Other Diary Dates

check the APSVIC website for more details.

22 April - APS Yarra Yarra Plant Sale 10 to 4.
Eltham Community Centre

29 April - APS Mornington Peninsula Plant Sale. 10 to 3.
The Briars, Mt Martha.

13 May - APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Sale 9 to 1.
TBC St. Andrews Uniting Church TBC

24 & 25 June - APS Ballarat Flower Show 10 - 4 at Robert
Clarke Centre Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Gillies Street.