



**APS Bendigo**  
Growing Australian Plants

**Australian Plants Society Bendigo**

# February & March 2020 Newsletter

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

----- STOP PRESS -----

**Our May and June meetings WILL NOT be on the regular 3rd Tuesday, and June will be at a different venue.  
Wednesday 20 May, usual venue, noted Eucalypt expert Dean Nicolle (from SA)  
Wednesday 24 June, St. Paul's Cathedral hall, noted Banksia expert Kevin Collins (from WA)**

Greetings -

Firstly, I'm glad to say that my computer issues have resolved - nearly! So this newsletter is a bumper edition covering both the November 2019 and Feb 2020 meetings.

Secondly, welcome to our 2020 year! And wasn't the shared dinner at our first meeting a feast! Hope you caught some of the big rains which are so needs in our region. Apart from gardening and enjoying the bush we have lots to look forward to this year. As you will see in the **STOP PRESS** above we are lucky to have two of Australia's top experts coming to speak at our meetings. Dean owns the Currency Creek Eucalyptus Arboretum in South Australia and Kevin has the Mt. Barker Banksia Farm in S/W Western Australia. Please let your friends know that they are very welcome to attend these talks, as they are for any of our meetings! There is also a chance to travel to the Pomonal Tuesday arvo meeting to hear Kevin Collins and visit some gardens!

So here's to seeing you on Tuesday when garden guru Royce Raleigh will be our guest speaker. Many of our members have met Royce and you all will have read his regular articles 'Growing at Wartook Gardens' in Growing Australian.

- Sandy

**7.30 pm Tuesday 17 March 2020**

**Royce Raleigh - Wartook Gardener**

*Supper - Carol Kramer, Marg Stove*

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

7.30 pm 14 April 2020 - Janet Justin's

## COMMITTEE BITS

Some members have expressed interest in attending the 'Australian Plants Revealed' exhibition which is split over two venues in Melbourne's east and commemorates 250 years since botanists Banks and Solander first visited Australia. At this stage hiring a bus does not appear to be possible but so far we have two committee members willing to drive and **wonder if there is another volunteer or two.** Committee has selected two dates (which have to be week days due to limited exhibition hours on weekends) and the two drivers are happy to do trips on both days. The days are Tuesday 24 March and Wednesday 1 April, leaving from Golden Square at 8am. BYO picnic lunch. A nominal fee will be advised for passengers. **If you have not done so already, please advise if you would like to go.**

On March 28 from 10am to 3pm we will have a table at the **Bendigo Sustainability Festival** and be handing out the Indigenous Plants of Bendigo book, brochures, and membership forms which will hopefully be returned with money on the day! Only two committee members are able to be there and so we are **asking for volunteers to help**, even for 30 minutes so the others can have a short break. Both Goldfields and Neangar nurseries will be there with experts to answer questions if you don't know the answer, and all who join on the day will get half price membership (through to mid 2021) and the Neutrog sample packs.

Talking of Neutrog - **forms are about to be sent** to members for our next group order. For those who have not used these products they are excellent and great value.

Committee also put out a call for **archivists.** We are pleased that two members have responded. If you too would like to help then let us know. We also spent some of our money and purchased a **document camera** for photographing specimens. If Lea can work out how to use it before Tuesday then you will see it in action!!

Lastly, thank you to those who have put their names on the **supper roster** - there are still a few gaps. With that roster is the **Plant of the Evening roster.** Challenge yourself to have a go at that one. It's a 5 min talk about a plant you love or find really interesting.

## The Great Plant Out 2020 - Seed Packaging

Someone called Sandy accidentally volunteered our group to package seed for all APSVIC members. After lots of long looks and heaved sighs members rose to the occasion on a hot day in early February and 1075 packs of microscopic seed were packed in 8 hours. Packers came and went as they could. A few stayed for the whole day. Food was brought and shared but we somehow almost missed breaking for lunch! This photo is some of the afternoon crew. One long-suffering husband went envelope hunting when we realised part way through the day that we needed over 1000, not just under as previously thought. At least 25 members were involved. Well done to us!



Meetings are held at the Golden Square Community Hall, Old High St, Golden Square, on the third Tuesday of each month from February to November. The room is open from 7.00 pm, for viewing of display specimens. Program begins at 7.30 pm.

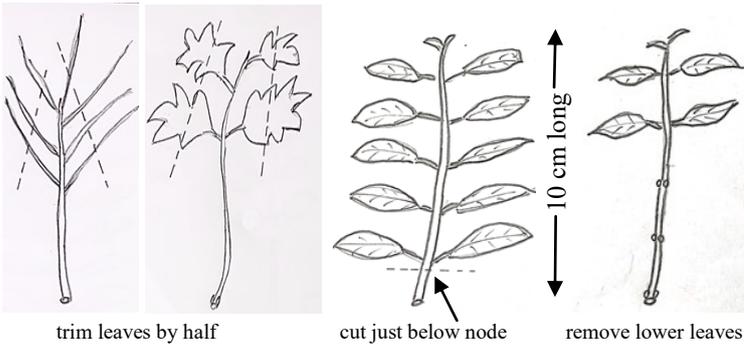
November 2019 Presentation  
**The Art of Cuttings**  
Talk and practical session led by  
Tony, Ian and Marilyn

Tony first became interested in native plants in the '70s when teaching at Golden Square High. S.G.A.P. (now APS) met at the school and that's how he met and was inspired by Ern Perkins and Geoff Sitch. Geoff taught him to take cuttings and he still uses the same method.

He uses a **mix of medium coarse creek sand and old saw dust** which when wet has good drainage so the cuttings don't drown. Ration 3 sand to 1 sawdust - which he gets when cutting firewood. Never use pine or softwood but you can probably use coconut fibre and the like.

Tony had 10 grevillea cuttings which have been in a 4 inch pot for about six months - even though winter is not the best time to be starting cuttings, it's better at the end of the year. We could see the roots just sticking out at the bottom which is the sign to pick them out and pop in individual small pots.

So, from the start, Tony uses **fine steel wool and metho to clean his secateurs** which have fine sharp blades - and he keeps his cutting secs separate from general gardening secs. Next he fills the 4 inch pots with medium and then he decides 'tip or heel cutting'. He also reduces the foliage on each cutting by trimming leaves in half.



For **tip cuttings** chop a stem just below a leaf node about 10cm from the tip. Leaving a few leaves on the tip, strip the other leaves by running your fingers down the stem, being careful not to damage stem by peeling any bark back, or, pick or cut the leaves off.

For **heel cuttings** - bend a side shoot down and pull it off the main stem so that you get a small sliver of bark from below the original join.

Tony then dips the base of each cutting in **hormone mixture** such as Yates Clonex Purple which is suitable for soft and semi-soft native cuttings. (Non purple is for hardwoods which is not really natives.) He makes holes in the medium and pops the bottom half of cuttings into mix.

The pots then go into a **hot frame or cold frame**. To make a hot frame, cut wire to make hoop that pokes into the medium in the pot then cover with a plastic bag. This method sometimes retains too much moisture leading to fungus and rot so you need to poke holes in the bag or secure bag up from the bottom a bit to allow air movement. A cold frame is a large box type construction with UV protection on the top. It keeps sun and frost out.

Once each cutting is potted individually he **hardens them off** by putting them in a semi-covered area, misting once or twice a day in hot weather and gradually get them into the wild! He uses a **Holman misting tap timer**. The newer ones can be controlled manually and from your phone! The misting can be set for 'seconds' as a minute is too long for cuttings.

**Ian uses Felco snips**, or Felco 2s for more solid wood, and cleans and sharpens them at the start of every day that they are used and doesn't disinfect as that removes good bugs as well as the bad. He uses **warm water with the steel wool** and sharpens with different sharpening stones - med, fine then super fine - sourced at Abbott Supply.

**He prefers to use 'plug trays'** which are large polystyrene trays divided into 240 cells to hold the plugs. The trays are from **Garden City Plastics in Dandenong**. The medium is '20mm Proforma plugs' made of compressed peat moss and neutralized to a PH of 6. Bendigo's alkaline water will increase the PH of the cells if the cuttings are slow to strike.

Ian **prefers tip cuttings** and only resorts to heel cuttings if the material is really short and it's all he can get. His heel cutting method is the same as Tony's but sometimes he shaves the base of the cutting with his secateurs.

Basic rule for tip cuttings 'If you can bend the material over and it springs right back it's right to go. If it won't spring back it's too soft.' It's also important to know what you are trying to grow. A cutting taken from an upright branch of the host plant will grow as a strong more upright plant. One taken from a low horizontal branch will tend to produce a weaker stemmed plant and won't have the strength to set good roots. Some nurseries will take material from any and everywhere which might be why some purchases fail.

He then gave advice for ground cover eremophilas he takes the tip off the cutting otherwise it will get really long with growth only at the tip, so pruning it back at the cutting stage produces a better plant. And for plants like correas and most shrubs he chooses slightly firmer cuttings with a central leader and not two or more main branches so when the dog damages or strong winds break it, you don't lose the plant if the stem splits. The only plants you don't prune back to one leader are ground covers.

Once he has selected his cuttings he puts them in **Clonex Purple in a small conical plastic medicine glass** and lets them sit for a couple of minutes so they draw up some of the hormone. He then drains them on paper towel and puts them into the tiny cells in the plug tray - one per cell. Some people put the top of a plastic bottle over their cuttings but Ian doesn't. He uses a **heated propagation bed** that is the size of the trestle table with a heating coil. It will fit 2400 cuttings which can form roots in as few as five days with some species. He later transplants them into 50mm square small black tubes.

This photo was taken on the 13/1/2017 - the cuttings are 17 days old



Ian's mist system is controlled by a **Holman irrigation controller** with a 8 fogging jets and a pressure compensator so that the outlets don't drip. It has 36 start times with a water saving function that takes the fogging down to 6 seconds at a time. He has it set **to fog for 30 seconds every 15 minutes in during the day summer** but sometimes he removes a program if it's not too hot.

The plants don't need to harden off as they root so quickly. He also has a corflute glass house and that's where he than grows on the potted cuttings until roots are starting to show out the bottom of the tubes, they are than placed in the open area with light overhead shade from the nearby trees.

When potting up he uses a **Grevillea/Banksia mix from Biogro that has no fertilizer added to it**. This way it will last a long time but made need added water if it dry's out. When adding fertilizer he uses either 8-9 month or 12-14 month release Low P Osmocote or and mix of these depending on how big the pot is or how long it will take to grow, and he also uses small amount of Super Green - a quick acting nitrogen supplement.

**Marilyn's** favourite secateurs are **Fiscars fine point** and they look grotty but are just well loved. . She doesn't use metho for cleaning but just **scrubs them in the sink**.



She **collects her cutting material in a plastic bag with a tiny bit of water**. They can be stored in those bags in the fridge for days. Marilyn uses those green vegetable bags that look like plastic bags.

For the cuttings she does much the same as Tony and Ian.

She generally takes **cuttings after the plant has flowered** and there is new growth but removes that new growth and demonstrated with *Micromyrtus ciliata* (which grows in the Whipstick) by shredding the leaves from the bottom of the twig, pulling off the new whippy growth and trimming base at a node. For *Isopogon formosa* she again pulled off new growth, cut off the side shoots and trimmed the bottom at a node. She also scraped the bottom. For Crowea, the same thing - pull off the new growth and trim at or below a node.

All her cuttings are popped into **Clonex Purple Gel** as soon as the cut is made - she sometimes uses Clonex Green which is not as strong. **It is important to wear gloves when using hormone treatments such as the Clonex as it will absorb through your skin**. There are other hormone treatments available including powders and liquids.

She has used **honey** on cuttings in the past but not found it as successful as the Clonex. She recently experimented with a mix of some honey treated cuttings and some Clonex Green treated. The next day, all those treated with honey were on the surface of the tray as something had been in and pulled them out and licked off all the honey!

She finds that **pulling the new growth off is quicker** than snipping and tends to get it back to the semi-hard wood.

Leschenaultia are incredibly easy to propagate and root in a just few days.

Like Ian, Marilyn pops her cuttings into trays and some go into communal pots like Tony does or into a metre square communal propagating tray. Her propagating **mix is 4 Perlite/2 Vermiculite/1 Peat Moss**. All her cuttings go **under misters and she uses a bit of Seasol**. If the cuttings have grey foliage she puts cut off plastic bottle tops over them and then only waters outside the bottle.

Many years ago she first started with a wooden box covered with plastic on the south side of a building under the shade of a tree .... and got amazing results! Even without misting but she didn't let them dry out. If it was a really hot day she would take the plastic off so that the cuttings didn't cook.

When the roots develop on the cuttings most go into normal tubes filled with potting mix that she sources from **Spotswood Holdings** in bulk and adds Osmocote. Again, she always wears gloves when handling potting mix. The tubes are placed in a protected spot until the roots take hold and she looks after them with Seasol, Go Go Juice and Seamungus. **She finds the Go Go Juice to be excellent**.

Members then had a chance to do a few cuttings and everyone seemed very happy! Thankyou Tony, Ian and Marilyn.

### Nurseries Who Support Our Group

*A bit of unashamed advertising for our members*

The owners of these nurseries are APS Bendigo members and generously support our group so don't forget to support them!



Revegetation and Forestry Plants

8 McClelland Dr. Eaglehawk Ph: 5446 9260

neangarnursery.com.au



230 Tannery Ln. Mandurang  
Ph: 5439 5384  
goldfieldsrevegetation.com.au



86 Maiden Gully Rd.  
Maiden Gully Ph: 0417 544 159  
habitatnativeplantcompa-

February 2020 Presentation  
**Specimens Galore!**

Wasn't it good to see such a selection of plants on our Feb. specimen table - especially so given the horrid hot weather and lack of water. Specimens galore and we looked at just about every one! So what did we see.....

**Bev C** brought along *Eremophila Calorhabdos*. Her plant is over 2m tall and hasn't stopped flowering for about 12 months! It has an open habit and she rarely waters it. Common names include 'Red Rod Eremophila' and 'Spiked Eremophila' and it is a cross between *E. polyclada* and *E. bignonia*. The deep pinkish-red flowers are insect pollinated and grow on the very long vertical stems. Birds love it.



Wikki Commons CC BY-3.0 au Murray Fagg

**John and Jan W's** offerings included *Grevillea* 'Ivory Whip' which was grown from a cutting 8 yrs ago. It is now a compact 1.5m x 1.5m plant that has huge ivory coloured flowers that birds just love; the orange flowered *G. molongo* is a hybrid of an upright red flowered *G. juniperina* and a prostrate yellow *G. juniperina*. It is extra prickly and grows as a low spreading shrub 1m wide by 30cm high; *G.* 'Superb' which is, as you say, "superb"! Their plant is 1.5m high and wide. The large red/orange flowers are similar to 'Robyn Gordon' and attract the birds. They forgive it's relatively untidy habit; *G. alpina* which is one of our very pretty locals and comes in a range of colours and is widespread across Victoria and into southern NSW. The popular *G.* 'Peaches and Cream' is usually low growing but their plant is nearly 2m tall and very bushy! They bought it at Goldfields 3 years ago and love that it is covered in large cream and peach coloured flowers the whole year; and *G.* 'Bush Lemon' has large stunning yellow flowers and is a new plant for them and has flowered continually except for a short time around Christmas.

Then there was *Callistemon subulatus* (below) which carries four or five of the lovely red bottle brush flower heads per branch. They've had this plant for some time and it is just under 1m tall and 1m wide. It is pruned regularly and doesn't mind being dry. The name comes from the Greek '*calli*' - beautiful - '*stemon*' - stamen; and their last offering; and last for John and Jan was a grafted *Eremophila nivea* which grows magnificently for them with the downy soft silver foliage and mauve/purple flowers. It also grows well from cuttings in Central Vic.



Wikki Commons CC BY-3.0 Eric in SF

Next was **Joan S.** Her *Goodenia ovata* (right) is 10yrs old and had become woody and dense so she took to it with hedge clippers. Now it is under control she just prunes selected canes and it's much happier. She had another goodenia which had been propagated from one the Estelle H was growing - believed to be a hybrid of the Whipstick goodenias *G. varia* and *G. benthamiana*. Her third goodenia was also pinched from Estelle and both Joan and Estelle looked blank as to the name so looked at Bev B who had the original plants. Bev proclaimed innocence so we are none the wiser as to the identification! All had lovely yellow flowers - did you know that some goodenias are blue?



Wikki Commons CC BY-3.0 Melburnian

Joan's *Eremophila purpurascens x alternifolia* is rarely pruned even though some experts recommending do so. It is propped up against the dead trunk of another plant and looks elegant with its sprawling habit. Usually a small plant Joan's is nearly 2m tall and growing in full sun. It is very hard to propagate.

**President Tony B** brought along *Grevillea* 'Moonlight' which he didn't grow himself but pinched from someone else who had two 2 shrubs, both 5m x 5 m, and looking wonderful despite not getting much water. They were covered in masses of the large creamy white flowers. This plant strikes readily and Tony does have one but his won't grow!

Next was his lovely pink *Crowea exalata* which is in a pot. Many could relate when he said that he has a bit of trouble with the one nurtured in the pot but one self-sown in a horrible spot is thriving!



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Sometimes we wonder about Tony ..... his next specimen was a fruit (seed pod??) labelled *Hakea* 'Zucchini' (*Z. Tronboncino*) which is an heirloom climbing zucchini and a prolific fruiter! The fruit grow to over a metre in length and are delicious. He told us it was endemic to upper Junortoun - he is a comedian!!!

On a more serious note, he also brought a small pot of *Billardiera heterophylla* (formerly known as *Sollya heteraophylla*) the 'Blue Bell Climber' and is very pretty but Tony told us DO NOT GROW IT as this Western Australian is a massive weed in the east of Australia.

Tony's offerings illustrated up a couple of good points - firstly that not everyone can identify what is and isn't an Australian plant, and secondly that there are some we shouldn't be growing in our region. For instance most of us love Cootamundra Wattle but it too has become an invasive weed.



Following Tony was **Margarete F** with a mystery plant. The small woody stem had tiny leaves and she told us that the flowers were mauve and in the tiniest of clusters. (She has not lived long at her house so inherited the garden.) We agreed that it was part of the Myrtaceae family and possibly an *Eremaea purpurea*. Margarete will have to bring another sprig when it is in flower!

*Acacia montana* 'Mallee Wattle' was next and **Dell C** who brought it along said it is a very nice shaped plant but not overly long lived. Hers is growing in a semi-arid quartz/clay/ironstone area just to the west of Bendigo. Her other specimens were *Dodonaea viscosa* 'Sticky Hop Bush', and Callitris which is a native conifer which she told us are both growing on bull dust mounds!

**Bev B's** *Thomasia solanacea* is an understory plant but grows up to 2 m if you let it. Grown more for the slightly furry lime green oak shaped leaves it does have small pretty white flowers with dark red centres. Then there was her mystery correa. She described the red and green flowers as 'not stunning' but birds don't mind - they love it. Bev loves that it is hardy too and suspects it has some 'Kangaroo Island' correa in it and perhaps some 'glabra'. As **Eric W** often tells us, correas are quite promiscuous when it comes to crossing! It was noted that correas are not the easiest to grow in Bendigo.

**June W** has a 2m tall *Kunzea baxteri* which has a dense habit and lots of flowers despite getting no attention! Hers has red flowers but it comes in orange too. Another from her garden was a leptospermum (tea tree). It is growing under the neighbour's huge deciduous tree so is tall and spindly however the masses of large white flowers are prolific.



*Grevillea calliantha* are known for their dark black or plum coloured styles on a variety of flower colours in the red/orange range. **Ian E** is growing some and told us they are rare and from WA. His plants are grafted onto *G. robusta*. The plants are mound shaped and covered in flowers for 8 months starting in spring.

*Eucalyptus synandra* has unusual tube shaped flowers rather than the typical 'ballet tutu' shape. The 2m tall tree weeps to the ground. Buds set in late October and flower 5 months later which is fast for a euc as most take 2 years from bud to flower.

*Stenocarpus sinuatu* 'Firewheel Tree' is a rainforest tree but will grow in Bendigo if you can get it through the first frosts. It is always in flower and has seed, buds and full flowers on same stem at same time. There is one at Fortuna Villa in Bendigo that is 6 or 7 m tall.



His *G. bipinnatifida* is a prostrate shrub and has masses of large grape-bunch shaped flowers in summer. The early evening light makes the flowers shine. This grevillea is a parent of the hybrids 'Peaches and Cream', 'Robin Gordon' and many, many others.

*Beaufortia orbifolia* 'Ravensthorpe Bottlebrush' is rarely seen at plant meetings as it has usually finished flowering at the end of January.

The stamen bunches are lime green at the base changing to a dramatic red at the ends.



Ian also showed us some grafted eremophilas that were beautiful with large mauve and purple flowers and are new to cultivation. There's not a lot known about them at present so we will have to get Ian to give us a proper presentation at a later date.

We ended with a discussion starting with unwanted visitors such as grass hoppers stripping plants, and rabbits 'trimming' plants to death. Ian has found that many plants pruned by rabbits don't recover yet those trimmed by secateurs are not bothered although Sandy Mc had her cut-leaf daisies eaten by rabbits but they grew back. Lea H who lives on the land s/w of Bendigo has had lots of scorpions, Tony who is on a bush block has a goanna and both Ian n/w of Bendigo and Bev B on suburban edge of Bendigo have had at least one snake each!

Last autumn Red Velvet mites killed Sandy Mc's correa. Harlequin Bugs decimated Ian's Billy Buttons and Robyn F had scale on her acacia.

We learnt that scale can be smothered with vegetable oil although a big infestation is likely to kill the plant and that Ian just reaches for the insect spray under the laundry trough for most mite type problems. He cheerfully told us that it often causes leaves to drop but the plants recover well!

Questions were raised about the rate of watering and we learnt that watering is only necessary every couple of weeks.

Before going home the specimen table was raided for cutting material all agreed it had been a jolly good night!

## The November 2019 Specimen Table

Bev C's *Eremophila polyclada* 'Twiggy Emu Bush' is five years old and 3m tall and in late spring early summer is covered in soft mauve and white flowers. It is the parent of many of the large flowered eremophilas.



Marilyn's *Verticordia citrella* shrub is 1m tall at this stage. It is grafted onto Geraldton Wax and has been in the ground 2 years and grows so well here she doesn't need to water it. The long stems grow from the ground up and is covered in the prolific yellow flowers for 1 1/2 months. It comes from near Kalbarri in WA where it grows in deep sandy soil so that's why it is grafted.



Karin's offering was from a street tree! She knew it was a Bloodwood but not much more. Several members jumped on their phones and a quick search identified it as *Corymbia eximia* 'Yellow Bloodwood'. The tree was just covered in creamy white flowers dripping with nectar and has bark that peels nicely. It can drop branches so it may be safer to grow *C. eximia nana*. Note - Corymbias used to be classed as eucalypts but the flower buds form and flower more quickly and they are 'terminal' - grouped at the very end of the branched stems. (\$1 coin in picture for scale)



Ian's *Grevillea scapigera* is WA species from near Corrigin and was presumed extinct in the wild but has been grown by Kings Park and Mt Annan Botanic Gardens and in some private gardens in Victoria and N.S.W. They tend to get fungal spots (*Glomerella cin-gulata*) on their leaves which can be treated with a fungicide but if they are grown as short standards, this may help prevent the fungal attack. *Grevillea scapigera* is incompatible with *G. robusta* as a root stock but can be grafted using an interstock such as *G. flexuosa* or 'Royal mantle', between the *G. robusta* rootstock and the *G. scapigera*. As they age Ian replaces them with fresh plants. It's well worth growing as each plant has 300 - 400 flowers which have a delicate arrangement of lightly scented, white or cream styles on a lime green base, and each flower is on the end of a long delicate green stem that stands up from the main plant. Very pretty.

*Ptilotus macrocephalus* was also brought in by Marilyn. She grew it from seeds collected at Newbridge and it also grows up to and in Mallee. She grows it for the cut flowers which hold really well.

After the flower head is finished she collects seed to grow more. The plant has low basal green leaves and masses of the creamy white flowers.



### APS BENDIGO DIARY

**Tuesday 21 April 7.30 pm** - John Lindner - Nth WA botany

**Wednesday 20 MAY 7.30 pm** - Dean Nicolle - Eucalypts

**Wednesday 24 JUNE 7.30 pm** - ST PAULS - Kevin Collins - Banksias

### Other Diary Dates

**17 Feb - 17 April 'Australian Plants Revealed'**

4 April APS Geelong Plant Sale 40 Lovely Banks Rd, Lovely Banks

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

2 May APS Mornington Plant Sale 10 - 3.30 Seawinds  
Arthurs Seat State Park, Purves Rd, Arthurs Seat.

**24 & 25/10/20 FJC Rogers Seminar - Eltham - *Lamiaceae***

For more info search [apsvic.org.au](http://apsvic.org.au) then 'members' then 'events'

### Bendigo Field Naturalists Club

7.30 pm second Wednesday of the month  
Golden Square Hall, Old High Street, Golden Square