



**Australian Plants Society
Cardinia Region Inc.**

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Free Public Lecture - Everyone Welcome

The Role of Mycorrhizae and Soil Biota in Australian Soil Health

Mycorrhizae are specialised fungi that assist plants in taking up particularly phosphorus from the soil. Ploughing and damaging the soil surface also damage the mycorrhizal biomass leading to loss of carbon from the soil, together with loss of water holding capacity in the face of a drying climate.

Reducing soil disturbance and increasing soil plant cover all lead to a more stable ecosystem with benefits to the soil, plants, and the environment.

Dr Cole describes the role mycorrhizae have played historically in terrestrial plant development and how they may well be the saviour of agricultural land into the future. They certainly maintain the balance of soil health in native systems. Australian soils are unique as are Australian plants and this uniqueness has evolved for a reason. That will be explored in this presentation.

JUNE MEETING; Tuesday, 11 June 2024

7.30 pm at the Deep Creek Function Room

62 Cameron Way, Pakenham.

SPEAKER: Dr. Mary Cole

Dr. Cole is a highly regarded academic, plant pathologist and soil microbiologist who provides instruction, workshops and courses in sustainable agricultural practices to farmers, students and consultants around the world. Dr. Cole founded the company Agpath in 1980. <http://www.agpath.com.au>

In 2018 Dr. Cole spoke to the Cardinia Environment Coalition (CEC) on the topic “Desert Abundance”. Mary had previously visited Egypt to assist the SEKEM organisation, as well as hosting Egyptian researchers at her Vervale property.

We discovered that Australian plants played a role in making desert soils surprisingly productive. They provided windbreaks, fuel, and fodder for animals; manure from those animals helped to enrich the soil.

SEKEM has now become the umbrella organisation for a multi-faceted agro-industrial group of companies.

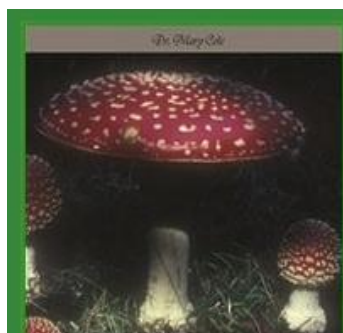
Items from May APS Vic Quarterly Meeting

- Participation in MIGS is worthwhile; 59 new members.
- Very successful Plant Sales recently at Geelong, Mornington and Yarra Yarra.
- Pomonal property of Phil Williams, with an important collection of local plants, was badly damaged by bushfires.
- Members are urged to renew memberships in June/July 2024.
- Vacancies remain on some ANPSA tours (30 Sept.- 4 Oct.). Early Bird offers close soon.

Famous Trees

An international travel company has listed what they consider to be the 10 most famous trees in the world. Can you guess which was the only Australian tree to make the Top 10? (Answer on P.4). The Avenue of Baobabs in Madagascar was ranked No. 1.

It must be difficult maintaining an up-to- date list of famous trees. In 1973 a drunk driver on a caravan route in the Sahara knocked over what was then the most isolated tree in the world. Last year the Anne Frank tree in Amsterdam was blown over in a windstorm. This year a famous sycamore tree near Hadrian’s Wall was chopped down by vandals. (See P. 4)



Dr Mary Cole – Mushrooms; Myths & Legends

Mushrooms are a favorite topic for Dr Mary Cole and this shows as she mischievously relates her tales from the ages. From a very early age Mary grew up listening to her father as he showed her which mushrooms to collect for their dinner. Mary has continued this early fascination and her curiosity has led to a deep knowledge of the world of mushrooms. As her passion has remained, fascination with the history of mushrooms grew as she discovered many references to mushrooms depicted in art and in early writings

Flowers for Mothers' Day

There is a good chance that the roses, tulips and carnations purchased for Mothers' Day came from Kenya, Singapore or Colombia. Import restrictions on flowers were eased more than 20 years ago and the idea of country- of- origin labelling was not recommended in a 2022 Report prepared by Deloitte Access Economics. Michael Pavlou from Bush Flowers, Carlton, urges us to ask where flowers come from, before purchasing.



New Videos of Mt. Worth

Mt. Worth is situated approx. 125 kms. southeast of Melbourne, between Korumburra and Warragul. Situated on the western rim of the Strzelecki Ranges, it contains 1080 hectares of Mountain Ash Forest and regenerating bushland.

Members of The Friends group have prepared some useful online videos for the armchair travellers.

APS Vic Videos

The APS Vic website provides access to videos, including some from Wangaratta.

APS Wangaratta Series 1. Open Garden 'Verticordia', South Wangaratta.

MimsMints



Endeavour Fern Gully reopens

Advice from The National Trust, Victoria, confirms that this 27-hectare property, with remnants of the original Mornington Peninsular bushland, has reopened. The property had been closed to the public, pending the completion of the new Nearkey Biik Education Centre.

Location: 195 Arthurs Seat Rd., Red Hill.

Open daily.

Free entry.

Snow Gums

John Arnott, Manager of Horticulture at RBG Cranbourne, has written an article for the latest edition of **the Diggers Garden Magazine**, which focuses on the best trees for Australian gardens. His article is entitled "There is no gum like a snow gum".

John points out that there are 6 subspecies of *Eucalyptus pauciflora* and some of the multi-trunked small trees can make terrific garden plants. His 2 favourites are:

Eucalyptus pauciflora subsp. *niphophila* and
Eucalyptus pauciflora subsp. *parvifructa*.

The latter plant originates from the Mt William area of Gariwerd, the Grampians, and is probably the smallest and hardiest of the snow gums.



The National Trust's Endeavour Fern Gully lets visitors experience the original natural environment of the Mornington Peninsula.

RBG Hobart

Gardening Australia (24 May) included a report on recent alterations to the Hobart Gardens. The loss of some big trees in a storm created an opportunity to show how local plants can be used in landscaping, including espalier, hedging, and container combinations.

Unusual forms of well-known plants are on display, including compact cultivars of silver banksias and a groundcover of woolly tea tree next to its more usual form, a tall, upright shrub.



Revegetation Successes

“The Conversation” website contains an article on the remarkable transformation of Merri Creek. One day we might see similar work started on Pakenham Creek. The removal of rabbits from Macquarie Island was a lengthy and expensive project but the vegetation has recovered quickly. **Photo below.** Great things are happening on Dirk Hartog Island, W.A.’s largest offshore island. Goats and sheep have been removed from the island and feral cats eliminated. The leaseholder was given freehold title to a small section of the island, as compensation for relinquishing the pastoral lease, and eco-tourism activities are based there. The heathlands are recovering well, enabling eight threatened animal and bird species to be returned to the island.



Researchers are trying to identify native plants which can be used to deter kangaroos from destroying valuable plants. They have had some success, by growing 5 or more boronias around the special tree!

A special welcome to members from other APS Districts, and staff from RBG Cranbourne, who will be attending our June meeting.

Deep Creek Seedbank

Adele Richardson and her team of volunteers have made great progress in establishing the Seedbank at the Deep Creek Indigenous Nursery, using funding provided by the Andrews Foundation.

They have tested germination rates of seeds collected in recent years and are replenishing supplies as seeds become available in the local area. Wet conditions and insect attacks have created some problems this year, but collection rates have generally been very satisfactory.

An ongoing issue is the risk of genetic loss, due to hybridisation with non-indigenous species; this can be a problem with acacias, correas and eucalypts.

Adele appreciates the support provided by APS volunteers, Anne and Gayle Savage.

The ABC’s **“Landline”** program reports that the Australian almond industry expects sales this year of over \$1 billion. A report on the tiny wattle seed industry is featured in a **“Country Hour”** interview, available on the ABC Listen app.

Invitation from South Gippsland group

Mark Dishon from Westernport Water will lead a guided tour of Phillip Island’s Constructed Floating Wetlands (CFW’s). CFW’s are used for the treatment of stormwater and wastewater. Like a hydroponic system, the roots of native plants grow into the water under the floating modules, creating the appearance of floating islands. The large surface area of plant roots facilitates the removal and capture of contaminants.

Where: Cowes Wastewater Treatment, 261 Pyramid Rock Road, Cowes

When: 11 July 2024 at 11.00 am.

RSVP: Ruth Campbell Ph. 0457 489 467

GARDENS



HELEN YOUNG

THE WINTER GARDEN

RING IN THE SEASON

The Winter Bells collection of 13 correas, bred by native specialist Peter Ollerenshaw, all flower in winter, many of them from autumn through to spring. Colours include white, cream, green and light pink to crimson.



Catie Bec



Canberra Bells



Snowbelle



OMG

THE BEE'S KNEES

THESE BEAUTIFUL WINTER FLOWERS ARE VITAL FOR POLLINATORS.

Correas or native fuchsias are small shrubs with bell-like, tubular flowers that attract birds and insect pollinators with their nectar. Importantly, many of them flower through winter when other food sources are scarce and gardeners welcome additional colour. Some varieties can flower most of the year. There are 11 native species, found in all areas except the Northern Territory, with flower colours ranging from white and green to pink, orange and red. Correas are generally tough, drought-tolerant and pest-free plants and they thrive in coastal areas; some take frosts. However, they do need good drainage and they don't like high humidity. The silver-leaved Correa, *Correa alba*, takes full sun but many others such as *C. pulchella* and *C. reflexa* – and varieties bred from them – thrive in dappled light, making them useful in shadier urban gardens and bush gardens under trees. Plant breeders have extended the colour range and flower size, and developed plants that are more compact. A light prune after flowering will keep plants bushy and you can even form the compact varieties into a low hedge. Correas also grow well in pots.



Australia's Famous Tree

Derby prison tree – ranked No. 8

Their Number One



News from RBG Melbourne.

Lightscape returns to the gardens on 14 June.

Guided tours of the Melbourne Observatory take place on selected Monday evenings throughout winter.

Bird walks are scheduled for some Wednesdays and Saturdays, June -August.

RBG Cranbourne Event

On Sunday, 30 June, there will be an opportunity to learn more about Alf. Salkin's 1970's Banksia trials. There will be a tour of the area in the morning and a presentation by Dr. Garry Price in the afternoon. Fees apply.

Next Meetings

9 July Dr. Gary Presland will be speaking on the topic: "Aboriginal History of Melbourne and Cardinia" **13 August "Dry Shade"** with Chris Larkin and Annual General Meeting.



Gone but not forgotten

Please contact Ian Chisholm (PH. 9707 1435) for further information about items in this Newsletter.