

# Australian Plants Society Cardinia Region Inc.

(formerly APS Wilson Park Berwick Inc.)  
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July 2024 Newsletter

## JULY MEETING, TUESDAY, 9<sup>TH</sup> JULY

Deep Creek Reserve, 62 Cameron Way Pakenham, at 7.30 pm.

### Kulin Country: Indigenous Life and Culture in the Port Phillip Region

At the time of European settlement, the Port Phillip region was the country of three indigenous language groups that were part of the Kulin “nation”. The Cardinia area was within the estate of a Boon Wurrung speaking clan called Yallockbulluc. As part of the Kulin, these people were connected in a variety of ways with clans that were as far away as the Murray River. Gary Presland will detail the nature of these connections and elaborate on how these First Nations people sustained themselves, at the same time honouring and caring for their country.

Speaker: [Dr. Gary Presland](#)

## AUGUST MEETING, TUESDAY, 13<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST.

A.G.M. and “Plants for Dry Shade” presented by Chris Larkin. Chris writes,

“I will be giving a talk on plants for dry shade and hopefully engaging Cardinia members in sharing and informing each other about the plants that have coped with these conditions in their gardens. In preparation for the evening, I would like you to identify/name these plants and send me your top 5 picks along with the type of soil – sand or clay, etc. – they are growing in. Hoping this will be a valuable exchange of information that can be shared both on the night and via your newsletter. Your replies should be sent to my email address [celarkin@bigpond.com](mailto:celarkin@bigpond.com) prior to 30<sup>th</sup> July so that I can prepare further for the evening”.

## Introducing our speaker Dr Gary Presland



Dr Gary Presland is an archaeologist, historian and writer, with interests in both pre-contact First Nations history and natural history, in the Melbourne area. He is the author of several published books on these subjects, including *First People: The Eastern Kulin of Melbourne, Port Phillip and Central Victoria*, and *The Place For A Village: How Nature Has Shaped The City Of Melbourne*.

Gary is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, and an Honorary Associate of Museum Victoria.

There will be at least two vacancies on the 2024/25 committee because Wendy and Alex Smart will be moving to the Geelong area later this year. We are most grateful to them for their remarkable contributions to this Group.

Let's hope that the buyers of the Smart's Beaconsfield property will maintain the spectacular native garden that has been created on a 1030 metre suburban block.

Members are urged to renew their memberships prior to our August A.G.M. A.P.S. Vic and group memberships can be paid by accessing the A.P.S. website. Please enter your email address as the “Username”; the password is your membership number found on the Growing Australian envelope. If you don't have a record of your membership number, Wendy, Marjanne or Ian may be able to assist.

Welcome to new members, Colin Potts and Melanie and Michael Pellow. We hope you can join us at next Tuesday's meeting.





# Andrews foundation

2024 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Andrews Foundation**, set up by local businessman, the late Ron Andrews. Ron was well known for his involvement with Pakenham Blue Metals, but he also had a keen interest in plants and gardens. During his lifetime, he funded major gardening projects at the historic National Trust property Ripponlea. In recent years, the trustees of the Foundation have provided significant assistance to the C.E.C. for the establishment of the Deep Creek Indigenous Nursery, Seedbank, and the two training rooms which are used by schools and community groups.

**Chris Russell** from RBG Cranbourne has been appointed to the position of Executive Director of R.B.C. Victoria, replacing David Harland who has returned to the U.K.



**John Arnott** has recently retired from his position as Manager of Horticulture at R.B.C., Cranbourne.

**Tim Entwistle**, well known for his work at Kew Gardens, and Sydney and Melbourne R.B.G.'s, recently interviewed the author of "Weeding between the Lines", a collection of John Dwyer's articles about weeds and what these plants tell us about our relationship with nature (Radio National's "Blueprint for Living", 22 June).



Congratulations to **Kay Taranto, O.A.M.** whose work with the Wild Days Wildlife Shelter at Narre Warren was recognised in the 2024 King's Birthday awards. As well as looking after injured wildlife, Kay helped persuade the City of Casey to instal "virtual fencing" along roadsides near to Churchill Park. Solar powered bollards have been installed which emit high-pitched sounds – inaudible to humans – when activated by the headlights of oncoming vehicles. There has been a reduction in the number of injury crashes in this area involving kangaroos. Problems with deer are also emerging in many parts of Victoria so regional councils have installed this technology at Mansfield, the Surf Coast and the Mornington Peninsula.

The **Doryanthus palmeri (Spear Lily)** specimen on display at our last meeting must surely be the largest exhibit to appear on our plant table. The plant originates from wetter areas in northern N.S.W. AND Queensland but grows successfully, albeit slowly, in Melbourne. It could take about 10 years for flower spikes to actually flower!

Other plants to attract attention last month included **Acacia macradenia (Zig zag wattle)** – presumably not the other Zig Zag wattle, **Acacia merinthophora**! The former is a winter flowering wattle that has bright yellow flowers and an interesting architectural form. It does prefer a warm position in the garden. Ray Turner, who attended the Mary Cole lecture, sent us this and other wonderful photos to use in our newsletter.



**Acacia merinthophora**

**Doryanthus palmeri (Spear Lily)**





Prominent horticulturist, **Helen Young** from Sydney has been contributing to radio programmes and newspapers for over 20 years. In the Weekend Australian magazine (June 22-23) Helen says...

“There is a species of native *Grevillea* in flower every month of the year, but some peak in winter when flowers are especially welcome for gardeners and wildlife. These four are tough and easy to grow, dry tolerant and bird attracting. They are best in full sun.

*Grevillea* “Firecracker”

*Grevillea* “Flaming Red”

*Grevillea* “Winter Delight”

*Grevillea* “Deuagold”

Helen also has advice for a reader wanting to eradicate rats, without harming owls or pets.

“Ratsak Naturals does not contain an anti-coagulant but kills rodents by causing them to dehydrate, so it is safe for pets, wildlife, livestock and people when used as directed. Birdlife Australia has an excellent page at [actforbirds.org](http://actforbirds.org) on what to buy and avoid, including traps and some anti-coagulant rodenticides that are less dangerous than others.”

The Winter 2024 edition of the “**Village Bell**” includes photographs of favourite trees from the Upper Beaconsfield area, as supplied by local residents.

Caro Letts has an article about the importance of protecting tree hollows.

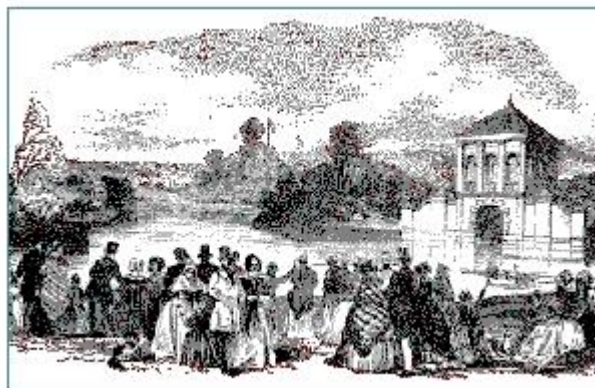
The long-awaited fuel reduction burns in the Dallas Brooks Scout camp, north of St. Georges Road have concluded. The concept of mosaic burning is being trialled throughout the Shire of Cardinia and will hopefully avoid the disastrous consequences that resulted from planned burns in central Victoria (see articles by Sue McKinnon and Neil Marriott in *Growing Australian*, June 2024).



4 photos from the Turner collection. These plants are *Astroloma foliosum*, *Diplolaena grandiflora*, *Xanthosia rotundifolia*, *Xanthosia tomentosa*.

**The Secret History of the British Garden**, a 4-part series originally made in 2015 and presented by Monty Don, was recently screened on the ABC and is available on iView. It shows changes in garden design over 4 centuries and provides a fascinating insight into how plants from all over the world were brought to Kew Gardens. We are reminded that public parks are a relatively recent development. In the 1830’s, wealthy industrialists created arboretums for their workers but the first publicly funded park in the world is believed to be Birkenhead Park, established 1847. Central Park, New York was opened in 1858 and Melbourne’s Flagstaff Gardens in 1862.

**Birkenhead Park** has recently been nominated for UNESCO World Heritage status, as has the Cape York Peninsula. The Peninsula was nominated over 10 years ago and is believed to be close to receiving “Tentative Listing” status. It has been shaped over thousands of years by Traditional Owners’ beliefs, customs and practices and is also home to 18% of Australia’s plant species, despite it being only 3% of the continental land mass.



A regular reader has confirmed that a milk spray can be used as a preventative measure against powdery mildew. Spray plants, preferably in the morning, every 7-12 days using a mix of 1 part milk to 10 parts water.

Recipes for the compost teas, mentioned by Dr. Mary Cole at our June meeting are freely available on Mary’s Agpath website. Bacterial composts are recommended for vegetables and fungal composts for fruit. There is also a general-purpose compost tea.

**Gardening Australia (June 21<sup>st</sup>.)** visited Karwarra Gardens to show us plants which can survive under large gum trees. Millie Ross suggested we plant Croweas, Wax flowers, Pomaderris and pea plants. She suggested we avoid plants that are delicate, brittle or precious because they could be damaged by trees dropping bark or branches. Tough strappy plants such as Lomandra or Dianella are great because they will bounce back and recover. Millie also suggests starting with small plants such as tube stock and leaving a small depression around plants, so that water doesn't run off. It is OK to plant close to the trunk as water will flow down the trunk and reach the plants.

Also from Gardening Australia

**What native tree suits a narrow spot?**

**CLARENCE:** The classic answer is the native frangipani, says Clarence. It's a surprisingly hardy rainforest tree that gets to about 5m wide

Another is celery wood, found from southern NSW to north Qld. It's tall and elegant, often umbrella shaped, a bit like a palm tree, and is fast growing. It rarely gets wider than 6m across.

For something bushier, with foliage lower down its trunk, consider the blueberry ash, which has a number of different forms. It's a great screening plant and is covered with masses of frilly pink flowers in spring followed by blue berries. It generally grows to about 5m wide, but cultivars such as 'Prima Donna' only grow to 3m.

**Featured Plants**

NATIVE FRANGIPANI	<i>Hymenosporum flavum</i>
CELERY WOOD	<i>Polyscias elegans</i>
BLUEBERRY ASH	<i>Elaeocarpus reticulatus</i> 'Prima Donna'

A recent TV show suggested that the **Turpentine tree (*Syncarpia glomulifera*)** provides the best leaves for gum leaf virtuosos. However, other musicians say that leaves from Yellow Box, River Reds, Ghost Gums and even exotic species, such as lemons, are also suitable.

Aboriginal gum leaf exponent, Uncle Herb Patten, provides expert You Tube advice for budding musicians!

# Four native alternatives to agapanthus for an Aussie-filled garden

The bright purple and white flowers of agapanthus can be seen far and wide across Australia. It is one of the most sighted plants in backyards and lining front fences.

It is definitely a favourite amongst Aussies, but agapanthus has a not-so-bright side as well.

Native to Southern Africa, agapanthus is a perennial plant with fleshy roots, dark-green foliage and tall spikes of purple flowers.

Often called Lily of the Nile, or African Lily, agapanthus is used in backyards and front gardens as a plant to easily fill as space, as it never has to be replanted and has low-effort maintenance.

**Are agapanthus plants invasive?**

The problem with [agapanthus](#) lies in its spreading ability. The older agapanthus is a clumping plant that self-seeds, meaning that its fleshy root system spreads quickly and takes over large spaces with ease. While that may be beneficial if you need to fill a large area, [this plant can take over space that other plants inhabit](#), including native plants. This means that agapanthus is often considered an invasive plant.

However, new agapanthus plants that you find in nurseries and plant centres have been 'sterilised', meaning that they do not spread easily. So to answer the question, agapanthus can be invasive, if they are of the old variety, or a normal, easy plant, if they are of the newer varieties.

For native plant landscapers like [Zach Barnett from Boronia Landscapes](#), removing old agapanthus plants can be a tricky conversation with his clients. They are beautiful and very easy to care for, but taking over the native environment is something that should definitely be avoided, even in urban spaces like backyards.

Instead, we've got four native alternatives for you to consider, that will help bring biodiversity back to suburban and city areas, while still providing a beautiful outlook.

- Blue flax lily (*Dianella caerulea*)
- Swamp lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*)
- Swamp lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*)
- Lord Howe Island wedding lily (*Dietses robinsoniana*)

The above article appeared in Better Homes and Garden

**Australian Plants Sale**  
to be held on  
**Sat, 7th September**  
**9am to 3pm**  
at  
**Akoonah Park**  
2 Cardinia St, Berwick  
hosted by the  
**Australian Plants Society (APS)**  
Cardinia Region Inc

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