



AUGUST MEETING

Tuesday, 13 August 2024

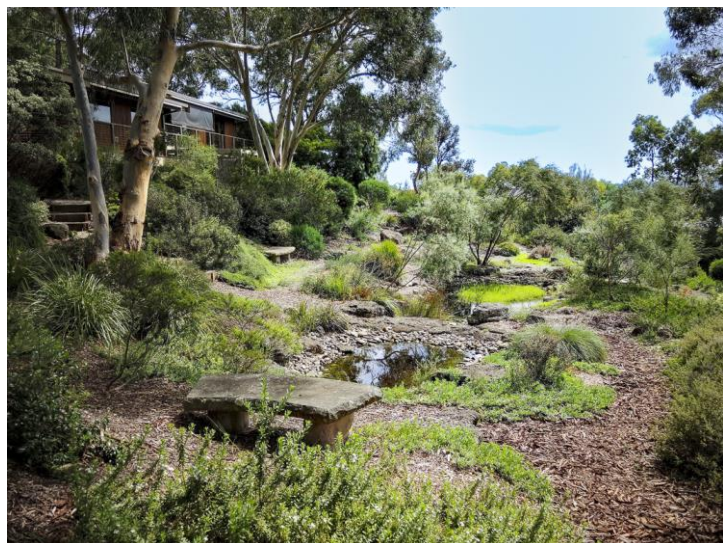
7.30 pm at Deep Creek Reserve,
62 Cameron Way, Pakenham.

**Annual General Meeting, followed by:
“Plants For Dry Shade” with Chris Larkin**

Chris has a flourishing garden in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges, which was featured on the ABC’s “Gardening Australia” in November 2023 (Episode 34).

Chris also contributes generously to national and Victorian APS publications. Topics have included “Garden Design for Climate Change”, “The Effects of Weather” and “How to Restore a Garden”.

Some of Chris’ useful tips appear elsewhere in this Newsletter.



A high canopy provides shade but allows the low-level winter sun to penetrate for diversity at Chris’ Garden.

NEXT MONTH: Tuesday, 10 Sept. 2024

Members’ Night:

Review of Plant Sale and Program for 2025.

Invasive Weeds

Plants, and packets of seeds, that are listed as being highly invasive are still being sold by many Australian nurseries, including Bunnings. Greenlife Australia, the national peak body representing commercial growers, still believes self-regulation is appropriate to manage this problem, not government regulation. Greenlife’s solution “Grow Me Instead”, cannot be a solution when the invasive plant is still for sale.

In Berwick, English Ivy (*Hedera helix*) grows prolifically in several residential gardens, including one next to the Jack Kirkham Reserve (see photo below). It is still available from Bunnings and is promoted as “easy to grow, hardy and versatile”; there is no mention that:

- it is listed as an environmental and agricultural weed for Victoria.
- *Hardenbergia violacea* (Purple Coral Pea) is one of the industry’s “Grow Me Instead” recommendations.

For information about nursery retailers stocking invasive weeds, visit the ABC website via this link:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/rural/2024-07-15/bunnings-criticised-for-stocking-invasive-weed-species-vic/10408222>

For details of Greenlife’s alternatives, go to:

<http://growmeinstead.com.au>

Thanks to Gayle Savige for this important item.



Q and A.

Wendy and Alex Smart are moving to Geelong in October, so we decided to ask them a few questions before they leave. We'll get Alex's answers next month; here are Wendy's responses.

What initiated your interest in native plants?

Growing up in Ballarat I was surrounded by beautiful gardens, our own and the Ballarat Botanical Gardens. But never Australian species; instead, it was roses, gladdies, begonias then later cymbidium orchids.

I was in my 20's living in Kyneton when Alex and I discovered the Black Hill Native Reserve. Like Cranbourne Gardens, it had been a gravel extraction pit for many years, hence prone to serious erosion and areas stripped of all plants. Other areas had good quality remnant native plants. Two that I remember particularly are ***Pelargonium rodneyanum*** (photo below) that made a great show through summer, and **terrestrial spider orchids**. As part of the management committee, one solution for the erosion was an endless supply of old tyres placed in the worst erosion gullies. Surprisingly, they worked very well at stabilising soil, enabling replanting and regrowth.

What are your favourite native plants?

Some of my treasured plants are the *Dendrobium teretifolium* Orchid species. A hanging plant with incredibly intricate and tiny flowers and highly perfumed. How can you not mention, waratah, kangaroo paws and perhaps double *Wahlenbergia*. This is a favourite as it spreads happily but is not aggressive and is a beautiful blue.

My involvement with RBG Vic and APS?

My connection with Cranbourne Gardens goes back 20 plus years. It has been a wonderful opportunity to be involved in the creation of the Australian Garden and its opening in 2006. When I retired in 2012, Alex and I moved to Beaconsfield to be closer to Cranbourne Gardens and it was at that time I joined the activities of both the Friends of Cranbourne and the local APS group. I have been Co-ordinator of the Friends Fabricators' group for 6 years, and this involved holding a textile stall in conjunction with the RBGC Friends' Plant Sale.



Pelargonium rodneyanum

Curly petals

What tasks have I undertaken as Secretary APC CR?

Organising the Annual Plant Sale has been a major task. Firstly, it was at Wilson Park Botanic Park, then at Akoonah Park. This has involved several plant growers, Councils and the management committee at Akoonah Park.

Future suggestions for our APS CR group?

The future is difficult as membership numbers for many groups like ours are dwindling. Part of this is a lack of younger people joining the groups.

Other interests?

I cannot imagine not being around native plants. Their beauty, suitability for our gardens and the community of keen Australian Native plant growers is welcoming and they have become close friends. Alex and I are moving to Geelong, closer to some family members, and there is a branch of APS nearby. We expect to support and contact this group but perhaps take a step back in our involvement levels.



**Thanks, Wendy,
for your
dedicated work
on behalf of this
group.**

**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

Trapped in the snow: Alpine huts; the story of Cleve Cole.

Plant lovers who enjoy exploring the Victorian high country could be interested in this State Library Victoria blog by Blair Gatehouse. Blair has some wonderful photos of historic huts.

Australian Garden History, July 2024 has some excellent articles on the work being done to restore historic gardens in Australia. There are also articles on the plants of Norfolk Island and the 37 Pandanus species found mainly in Queensland.

200,000 New Trees Needed in Melbourne

A housing advocacy group claims that densification in inner Melbourne suburbs will lead to the loss of many hectares of trees, thus affecting the quality of life. In some suburbs, previously mandated garden areas of 25% to 35% are being replaced with high density housing.

Professor Joe Hurley from RMIT, says we need strong tree canopies to counter the urban heat island effect, caused by surfaces such as asphalt and concrete trapping heat.

A Berwick car dealership has been fined \$40,000 for felling 5 significant- listed spotted gums. Three of the trees were growing on Casey's road reserve and two were on Barry Bourke Motors land at 755 Princes Highway, Berwick. The contractor was fined \$1200.



The City of Casey, in conjunction with Planet Ark, commemorated **National Tree Day** on July 28th, 2024, by hosting a tree planting event at Troup's Creek, Narre Warren North. About 10,000 trees were planted. We are not aware of any similar large-scale event of this nature ever being held in the Shire of Cardinia.

New flag needed? The 2024 Olympics have generated a debate in newspapers about the need for a new Australian flag. The following letter appeared in The Age (31st July 2024).

[A new flag? Wattle that say about us to the world?](#)

As most people seem to approve of the Australian Olympic uniform colours of green and gold, I suggest our new flag depicts a sprig of golden wattle on a green background. After all, the golden wattle (*Acacia pycnatha*) is our national emblem. It is a unique statement of our national identity, and although I love kangaroos, they don't quite have the gravitas required.

Margaret Collings, Anglesea

Try to prune plants before the heat of summer or even during summer with the idea that reducing the size of the plant will reduce its need for water. C.L.

Naidoc Week Event at Pakenham Library

Anne Savige attended an informative "Bush Tucker and Medicine" presentation by **Living Culture**, an indigenous cultural education organisation from the Mornington Peninsula

Attendees were told about the significance of several native species:

Coast Banksia (*Banksia integrifolia*) is very flexible and made good sewing needles. The cones produce a light, sugary flavoured drink when boiled in water. The bristles of the dried flowers were used as a hairbrush and the dried seed pods made good fuel with which to transport fire.

Drooping she-oak (*Allocasuarina verticiliata*) is a significant plant in the dreamtime story. It is a strong wood used for tools such as boomerangs; the leaves are sour with no known nutritional benefits, but they can be used as a natural flavouring, particularly when wrapped around fish and cooked.

Melaleucas were used in shelters and to assist with cooking i.e. a hole was dug and closed with bark, thus trapping moisture. Soft melaleuca layers even became disposable nappies!

Bracken Fern (*Pteridium esculentum*) was used as a medicinal plant for relief from stings and bites.

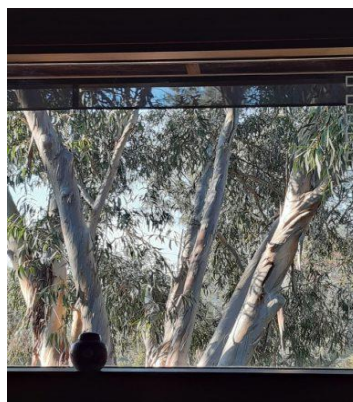
Tea -tree oil was used for cleaning hair and as a medication for colds and flu.

Weeping Myrtle was said to be significant for mental health and respiratory system ailments, with heat used to extract beneficial oils. However, Anne is wondering which local species can be referred to as "Weeping Myrtle" - do we have a botanical name?

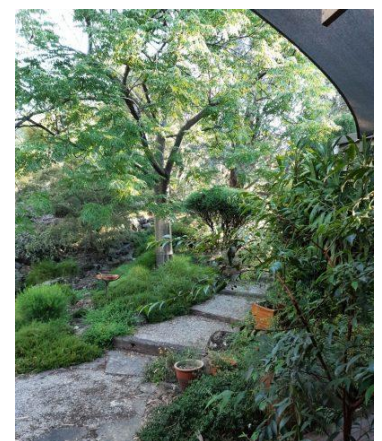
For more information, Anne recommends Tim Lowe's 'Wild Plant Foods of Australia' and a Museums Victoria website:

<https://museums victoria.com.au/bunjillaka/about-us/the-plants-of-milbarri-garden/>

Before you make changes to your garden, try to visualize what you will see from inside the house. C.L.



Plants can frame a view and draw the eye down a garden path. C.L.



Alex Frayne has spent years capturing images of South Australian landscapes. Here is his photo of Julie Anthony's hometown, Galga, (current population 15).



Cars kill 10 million native animals each year

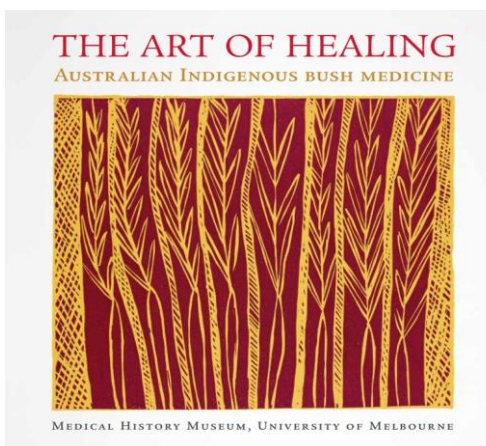
The Age (4/8) reports that virtual fencing trials on Phillip Island have had limited success, especially with swamp wallabies and possums which seem to ignore the warning sounds.

The Volkswagen company is conducting research into a Roo Badge, designed to fit into a VW badge which will scare marsupials off the road. If successful, they promise to make the product available to other car companies.

Common products banned around the world are killing our owls.

This "Age" article highlights an issue mentioned briefly in our last Newsletter. Rat and mouse poisons containing second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides are effective at killing rodents and possums, and, consequently, the powerful owls which feed upon dead or living possums.

Birdlife Australia's actforbirds.org web page tells us what to buy or avoid.



This is both a beautiful coffee table book and a resource book on Australian indigenous bush medicines health and art.

The Radio National Science Show (27 July) was largely devoted to Biodiversity. One item related to "Highlands Rewilding". In the Scottish Highlands, deer and sheep have destroyed most of the original vegetation and any tree plantations are usually exotic species such as pines. The use of pine trees for building materials, in preference to bricks and concrete, is being encouraged and a significant reduction in sheep and deer numbers has seen remarkable regeneration of vegetation occurring in the Cairngorms.

A second item reported on the return of native species, such as the grayling and platypus, to the Werribee River.

Alert locals have reported that "Opera House" nets are still being used in local waterways. These Nets are banned in most Australian states to protect air-breathing animals such as freshwater turtles, platypus and rakali (native water rats) from drowning. However, they are still being sold online, and in some sporting stores, to people claiming to need them for harvesting yabbies from farm dams. Fisheries Victoria, the Akoonah Park Committee of Management and the City of Casey have been advised that Opera House Nets are still being used in Cardinia Creek.

Footnote. Former members of this group played a key role in the local platypus story. After the 1983 bushfires, the animals were not sighted in Cardinia Creek for over 20 years. Our members helped to fund the translocation of platypus from the Tarago River. They also pressured responsible authorities to remove weed species such as willows from the catchment.

"A strong negative relationship has been demonstrated to exist between the occurrence of willows and the distribution of platypus foraging activities". Serena et al 2001.

The Impossible Garden. This is the description used by The Sydney Morning Herald (July 22nd.) to describe the Inverewe Gardens in western Scotland. Thanks to the warming currents of the Atlantic Gulf Stream, species that would usually wither at this northerly latitude can survive. Tasmanian ferns and eucalypts are growing here, along with Wollemi Pines. The property is now managed by the National Trust of Scotland.



Another Alex Frayne photo