



APS Foothills Inc. A0013126K

**WE HOLD TWO MEETINGS
EACH MONTH**
DAY MEETING

Date: 2nd Tuesday of the month
except November, December
and January.

Time: 10.30am

Venue: Field Naturalists Hall,
1 Gardenia St, Blackburn.
(Melway 47K10)

**Combined
Newsletters
2020**

APRIL
-
MAY

ENQUIRIES

Email: foothills@apsvic.org.au

EVENING MEETING

Date: 4th Wednesday of the month,
except December and January.

Time: 7.45pm

Venue: Knox Park Primary School,
Kathryn Rd, Knoxfield.
(Melway 73 C3)

**FOOTHILLS
FACEBOOK PAGE**

www.facebook.com/apsfoothills

VISITORS WELCOME!



APS Foothills Inc. A0013126K

April Newsletter 2020

DAY MEETING and EVENING MEETING

Cancelled until further notice.



I made some Banksia friends to keep me company during lockdown - I hope they help keep your spirits up during lockdown too!

Janet

Foothills Facebook Page

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Hi Everyone,

Well, 2020 is certainly turning into an interesting year. Who would ever have guessed, that in the few short weeks since I saw you last, that a virus would turn all our lives upside down like this?

You will already know that with the government restrictions now in place, and with the best interests of all of you at heart, that we have cancelled all meetings and activities until further notice.

We have contacted the speakers we had on our programme and will look at re-scheduling their presentations for later this year or next year. We will also keep you informed along the way, as to when we will resume our meetings.

In the meantime, and because we know you will surely be missing your monthly 'Foothills Fix', we will carry on with our newsletter as usual. As we won't have any meetings to report back on, I'd be thrilled if you'd consider contributing something to our newsletter. It could be a photo, or an article (even if it's only a couple of lines), perhaps something about what's happening in your garden or something interesting you'd like to share. We can't gather physically and catch up with each other as we usually do, so how about we 'gather' via the newsletter? You can send your bits and pieces to Kerry (see his email address and our deadline in the info panel at the end of the newsletter), and we'll take it from there.

So, here's looking forward to seeing what you're getting up to during lockdown in our next newsletter but the meantime, I hope you are all safe and well, and in good spirits!

Take care.

Janet Hodgkiss.

250th anniversary of Captain Cook's voyage to Australia and Australian Plants Revealed

Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus crisis, APS Victoria Executive had to make the decision to cancel the events (APS Victoria Committee meeting, lunch, talks, dinner) which were to be held on Saturday March 28th in Ringwood. It is possible that the talks may be rescheduled to another date.

Due to the government restrictions on social distancing and gatherings, the separate exhibitions at Ringwood Federation Estate and Karwarra Australian Native Botanic Garden & Nursery have also been closed.

If you paid for dinner on the Saturday night you will receive a refund. If you haven't received your refund yet, please email your bank account details to APS Victoria Treasurer Bev Fox at apsvictreasurer@gmail.com

It wasn't just our own celebrations of the botanical finds that have been suspended by the coronavirus outbreak - the National Maritime Museum's 250th anniversary plans for this notable event have also been put on hold.

A report I read stated that the \$8.5 million Encounters 2020 program included sailing a replica of Cook's ship the *HMB Endeavour* around Australia over 14 months and the companion touring exhibition "Looking Back, Looking Forward".

The Museum has suspended the program to ensure the health and safety of the public and voyage crew given the current COVID 19 pandemic and they are considering other ways to mark the anniversary, including through its online program.



The HM Bark Endeavour replica, photo courtesy of the National Maritime Museum.



***Corymbia ficifolia* in spectacular flower. The pink one was absolutely shimmering with honey bees and native stingless bees (Photo: Janet Hodgkiss)**

Second Day Meeting for 2020

(and the last one for the moment)

What a start to this decade we are having.

After several years of trying to get Bev Hanson to give us a talk, we finally succeeded this month, and it was well worth the wait!

Bev graduated from Burnley after three years of horticultural grounding and landed a job with Ellis Stones as his assistant, doing all the office work which included drafting landscape plans, sending out accounts, paying wages to the men employees as well as hands on working on gardens as they were constructed etc. Stones had been shot in the leg at the landing in Gallipoli WW1 and because of this Bev said "I found myself also at times his driver." He was a landscaping guru and specialised in rocky outcrops when there were no bobcats. Everything, including large rocks had to be moved by hand using steel rollers and crowbar.

Bev's talk was actually titled "Landscaping in the Natural Style", followed by "Principles for Designing an Informal Garden."

She ran through several of the projects she has worked on, over a dozen examples, and gave us before and after pictures and in the process many renovation and idea tips.

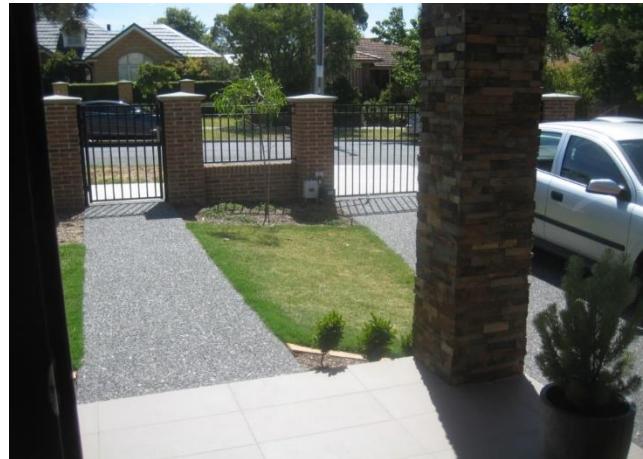
One of the gardens we visited was in Bradleys Lane where Carole and Myer Sibbell's daughter lives. It was an Alastair Knox house built in the 1970s, bought recently by Missy Higgins. This was an occasion when the landscaper worked closely with the architect right from the beginning, giving input even as to which way to face the house. When this happens, it gives the owners the best outcomes. "Windows are the Eyes of the House" was often repeated by Bev. I so agree with this, especially at this time of self-isolation.



We were given a terrific example of how to manage an embankment. Instead of sleepers which inevitably go in straight lines, this can alternatively be managed by using rocks effectively. As a bonus

you can also have a pleasant outlook from windows facing the embankment.

Bev told us about the way she managed to add interest to Debbie Jerkovic's garden in Glen Iris by changing levels and introducing raised beds. This not only adds interest but the plants grow far better. Hoses were placed on the lawns to outline where the beds would be put. With the help of Tom and his bobcat the landscaping was easily executed. Debbie's garden and her near neighbour, Eleanor, will be in the Open Garden Scheme later in the year.



We also saw several projects either putting in fishponds or converting pools. Basically, strong liners are used and held down by rocks (ably placed by Tom and his bobcat), then the liners are covered with river pebbles, soil and finally planted.



We finished at the Peace Garden, Warrandyte Uniting Church where a stunning mural of ceramic tiles in the shape of 3cm doves had been made by 1100 locals from kindergarten children to senior citizens. They were then woven into a story of the universe by some talented Warrandyte artists. Here again, the bobcat was used for sculpting the grounds. In addition, a very practical wall cum seat was built out of bluestone near the main entrance. This peace wall and indigenous garden are open to public viewing anytime on the corner of Taroona Ave and West End Rd.

All told a very informative and interesting talk, and as I said at the beginning, well worth waiting for.

Nicky Zanen

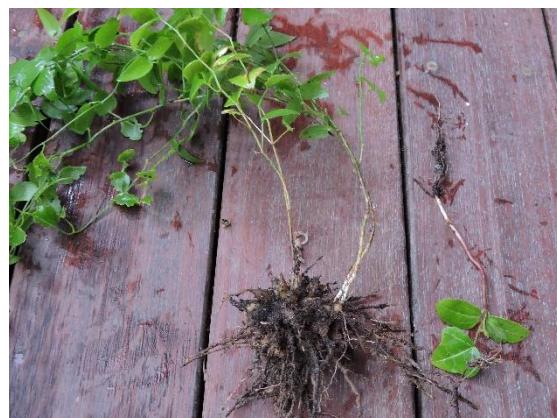
Weather, Weeds and Wonder by Chris Larkin

What an astonishing amount of rain we have had so far this year. And as I type this in on a cold, windy, wet day it is still raining. It feels like winter. It is April 4 and so far the Scoresby weather station has recorded 138.4mm in Jan, 115mm in Feb, 78.4 in March and 97mm in April so far. This is a year-to-date total of 428.8mm. I have actually recorded a bit more than that. Saturday's Age of March 3rd records Melbourne's rainfall as 285.4mm year-to-date compared with a mere 42mm in 2019 by the same time.

What does this extraordinary rainfall for month after month mean for the gardener and the garden? It has certainly been a relief not to have to water and worry, worry and water over summer. I have ended summer with full tanks currently overflowing. This is despite my recent attempts to splash the water around on the garden just to make more space in the tanks. I obviously didn't try hard enough. The garden is looking in many ways more like a spring garden. Daisy plants like brachyscomes and chrysocephalums are still in full flower when they have normally died back. Thryptomenes are flowering. Isn't this a bit early? Philothecas can barely contain themselves. It all makes for a lush, lovely garden full of colour. I do wonder if there is early flowering of some plants whether these plants will flower more than once when they work out their timing is wrong, or maybe they will just keep flowering for a very long time if the weather continues to be gentle. I wait and watch.



I am showing you a picture of a dwarf Banksia spinulosa type I have had for a very long time. Normally it is lucky to produce 3 or 4 flowers but this year due to the rain it is really showing off. This tells me this is a plant that needs a certain amount of summer water to flower at its best in autumn. It is a good year so far for banksias. I was a bit despairing about the future of growing some of the Banksia spinulosa types. In fact I have already removed several but will now sit back and enjoy the show from those that remain.



I don't mean to end on a down note when there is so much to celebrate in the garden at the moment so I won't end here. I do however want to mention some weed species I'm currently contending with. The picture shows a reasonably advanced plant of bridle creeper. I have pulled out these plants with little growth above ground but a big cluster of corms already developed under the soil to power the plant along through the toughest of times. It is a major weed in dry bushland areas of western Vic and adjoining parts of SA. I understand they have developed some way of managing this invasion but it beggars belief how you would deal with all the plants scattered throughout the bush. Next to that plant is dear old ivy. It needs no introduction I am sure. Finally I am generally finding around half a dozen single leafed palms dotted around the garden

each time I wander around. All these weeds, and others not mentioned, must be growing somewhere close by and gifted to me by wind or wildlife.



Speaking of wildlife this southern-cross spider has been hanging around my back deck area for many weeks now. A beautiful creature. As I work in the garden there is bird activity aplenty – pardalotes, thornbills, scrub wrens, eastern spinebills, New Holland honey eaters, grey fantails – to name some of the common small birds zooming around keeping busy, busy, busy.

We are lucky to be gardeners at this time. We always have garden jobs to do and the pleasure of being in the garden observing what is going on and enjoying what nature has to offer on our patch.

APS Yarra Yarra Native Plant & Book Sale – Cancelled

We have had the following notification from the Yarra Yarra group:

We regret to say that due to the ongoing advice around protecting ourselves against Covid-19 and to reduce its spread, we are unfortunately **cancelling all group activities** – general meetings, garden visits, **Autumn Plant Sale**, etc. until further notice.

Apologies to all those looking forward to our Native Plant & Book Sale on 18th April. We hope to have alternative arrangements for purchasing some of the Yarra Yarra member grown plants online, with arranged pickup at local venues.

Watch our website
<https://apsyarrayarra.org.au/australian-plants-expo/autumn-plant-sale/> in coming weeks for more information on this.

13th FJC Rogers Seminar 2020 - Mint Bushes & Allied Genera.

Please note that Registrations are on hold until a decision is made at the end of May regarding whether it will go ahead on time.

If you would like to be added to their Expression of Interest mailing list, please write to them at:
fjcrogers@apsvic.org.au



Prostanthera magnifica (Photo: Janet Hodgkiss)

Kuranga Nursery

The following information from Kuranga Nursery, which is current as of Tuesday 23rd March, 2020, is as follows:

Kuranga Nursery and gift shop is open and trading without limitation.

Our usual open hours are maintained. Open 7 days, 8:30am - 5pm.

Paperbark Café is open for takeaway only as per Stage 1 restrictions enforced by the government. Open 7 days, 8:30 am - 3pm.

PLEASE NOTE: these are reduced trading hours

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Deputy Leader: Elizabeth Triggs
Secretary: Nicky Zanen
Treasurer: Chris Larkin
Newsletter Editor: Kerry Davis
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Other Members: Pam Yarra

MEETING DETAILS

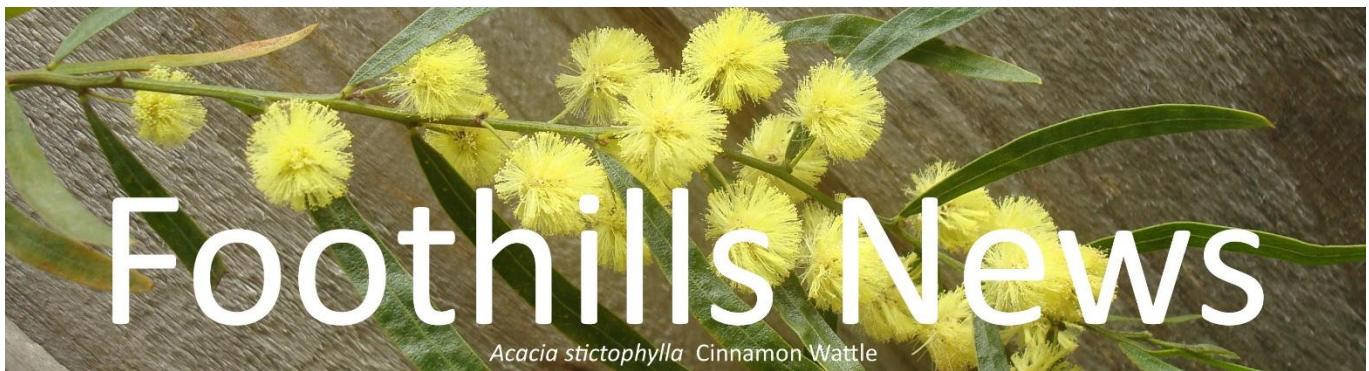
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Foothills News

Acacia stictophylla Cinnamon Wattle

APS Foothills Inc. A0013126K

May Newsletter 2020

DAY MEETING and EVENING MEETING

Cancelled until further notice.



Missing my sea-walks. Seaweed at Barwon Heads 2009
(Photo: Janet Hodgkiss)

Hi Everyone,

Hope you're all doing well and managing with our lockdown.

I don't know about you but my garden is starting to look much more neat and tidy than it usually does at this time of the year, simply because I haven't had the distraction of being able to go wandering in the bush or down at the sea on the weekends!

I must confess that when I see random mushrooms popping up on people's nature strips when I go for my local walk, I know there must be a wonderful array of autumn fungi popping up in the bush, and I can't help but wish that all this coronavirus stuff never happened, or that it was well behind us, so that I can head off to Bateman St, Antonio Park and my other favourite haunts to check on the state of nature.

It's coming into Correa season too and my heart lifts when I see them in the council plantings and other people's gardens because it reminds me that while winter is bearing down upon us, it is the time for many of our native plants to shine. Even if some don't actually flower until spring, all winter long you get to enjoy watching the buds form and swell, and surely that alone, is enough to make anyone happy. It's a reminder too, that all life is cyclical and there's always hope and something to look forward to!

Keep looking out for our native beauties, keep safe and take care.

Janet Hodgkiss.

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Foothills Facebook Page

Over the last 2 weeks of April, Foothills have run a Correa Photo Competition on our Facebook page, with a prize of a 4kg tub of Bush Tucker for the best photo. The competition was open to everyone.

There were some great photos and the Winner is Deb Mc with the photo of *Correa reflexa* 'Tutu'.

Deb fulfilled all the criteria of:

Like the page, Share the post and submit a Named Correa photo.

In total we had 7 photos posted and we generated 13 new page likes in the process.

www.facebook.com/apsfoothills

Liz Triggs



Correa reflexa 'Tutu' (Photo: Deb Mc)

Bits and Pieces

Thank you, Janet. I always enjoy your detailed articles and generous comments about whomever or whatever the topic. I will try to add some notes in response to your request.

Like everyone else, I suspect, I have been in the garden every day, enjoying some superb autumn weather and slowly catching up with pruning, weeding, planting my cuttings and rearranging plants. At this time, I really am so grateful to have a large garden to play in and be constantly surrounded by the natural world.

The lengthy list of plants in the many garden beds is also slowly being updated; it was a great time for that on the long rainy days recently (235mm for April!)

Earlier in the year, I was delighted to see that the Superb Fairy Wrens (*Malurus cyaneus*) had returned and were flitting around in my *large Correa backhousiana* and the tangle of *Hibbertia scandens* and *Pandorea pandorana* 'Lady Di', a lovely white hybrid. I heard from someone that Blue Wrens liked a dense, untidy clump to hide in. It's been quite a few years since we've seen them.

In the open area behind the house, the shy and wary Bronze-wing Pigeons (*Phaps chalcoptera*) with their quaint little bobbing walk, have become a little more trusting, coming to the birdbaths early evening and are wonderful to watch as they feed on the ground. Of course now with the rain, the birds don't need the water.

Monika Herrmann

Ferns

The recent good rains have meant lush growth everywhere and I agree with you Chris, the small banksias are flowering abundantly like never before.

One other notable species in the garden is the naturally growing King Ferns (*Angiopteris evecta*) that have come up without bidding, one along the road garden and another two on the slope. I didn't know which specie it was earlier but it was identified on good authority by Bob Chinnock. They look healthy and fresh and I have to remove/prune other plants to make room. Another fern that has come up naturally in many places in the garden, mainly from

between rocks, is the local Slender Brake Fern (*Pteris tremula*). This fern has only appeared in the last ten years or so. It is a lovely, tough fern but fancy having to prune it severely all the time to get past or give other plants a go? Not complaining!

We returned from central India on the 18 March after a thoroughly interesting and wonderful trip, with morning and evening jeep safaris in four of the national parks. More tigers than we expected to see, lots of different deer and other animals, including the Sloth Bear ('Baloo' in Kipling's Jungle Books) and what beautiful birds they have! We were so glad that we were still able to enjoy that. We only lost the last few days of the safari when our agent in India called to say that the Government was threatening to close the state borders and he booked us back to Delhi and a hotel. From there, Rolf spent some time rearranging the return flight and we made it home without further ado and then two weeks solitary. For us the solitude has been wonderful except that we can't cuddle our 6 mth old granddaughter!

Monika Herrmann



At least a dozen *Pteris tremula* Slender Brake Ferns are coming up between rocks

(Photo: Monika Herrmann)



A welcome King Fern *Angiopteris evecta* that came up along the road strip. The tall plant behind is *Lambertia orbifolia*

(Photo: Monika Herrmann)



Correa reflexa in a local council planting 2020

(Photo: Janet Hodgkiss)

Plant review by Liz Triggs

Acacia floribunda 'Little Flori'

A new release Acacia in the Bush Magik range. 'Little Flori' is a dense ground cover with soft yellow rod like flowers in Winter and early Spring.

It is adaptable, growing in dappled sun to full sun in a variety of well drained soils.

Size: 30-50cm by 50cm

Use:

- massed under a tree as a ground cover
- cascading from a pot or basket
- to create a void amongst or between larger trees and shrubs
- as a habitat plant to attract pollen feeding insects
- to provide weed suppression in an open space
- low garden border



Acacia floribunda Little Flori (Photos: Liz Triggs)

Weather you like it or not

Gardeners are always interested in the weather. To some extent their very moods can be paralleled with the weather. It's a common topic of conversation isn't it?

The astonishing and confounding amount of rainfall for 2020, up to the end of April, is certainly worth noting. As you may have heard Melbourne's rainfall in the first four months of the year has exceeded the total rainfall for the whole of 2019. The total for 2019 was 374.4mm and up to April 30 400.8mm has been recorded. Fortunately for me and other Knox residents Scoresby has a weather station so it is easy to get totals for this area although there are sure to be differences even over Scoresby proper. I have a suspicion I get slightly less rainfall. But back to weather totals and comparisons. In Scoresby the total rainfall up to April 30 is 533mm, which is a 33% increase on Melbourne's. This is not surprising because the further east of Melbourne you travel the wetter it gets. It has been said that Melbourne lies in a 'rain shadow'. Unfortunately I have not been able to easily find out what Scoresby's total for 2019 was to compare this annual figure with Melbourne. We are now two days into May and it has rained on both days. Rainfall is already significant in that month so totals keep rising.

Chris Larkin, wet and watchful at Lysterfield



Lots of rain (Photo: Chris Larkin)

Some Like it Wet, Very Wet

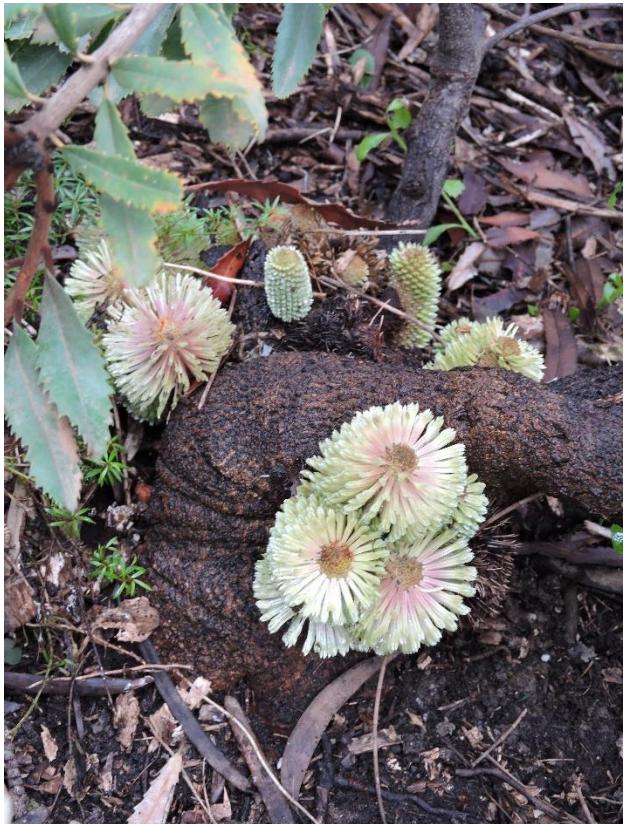
I have a couple of plants growing in my garden that have particularly liked this wet weather. One of them is dwarf Banksia paludosa. It's a NSW swamp banksia, so no surprises there about enjoying soggy conditions. For many years I had the non-dwarf *B. paludosa* but this had to be removed a few years back perhaps because conditions had become too dry. I have planted the dwarf one at a low point in the garden, on the edge of the drive, where water inevitably finds its way down the sloping land will reach this point. It has lovely pale yellow brush flowers with plenty of pink undertones that can be easily seen and enjoyed. Hidden from view there are a cluster of flowers growing at the very base of the plant.

I have a very old plant of *Melaleuca lateritia* which is a WA species. It does not have a very attractive growth habit although I have tried and tried to prune it into a more acceptable shrub. Luckily I have stayed my hand from removing it because this year it has flowered now for months. The flowers are a most unusual tangerine colour – a flower colour that no other plant in my garden has.

Chris Larkin



Banksia paludosa (Photo: Chris Larkin)



Banksia paludosa (Photo: Chris Larkin)



Melaleuca lateritia (Photo: Chris Larkin)

Out and About

Or in and out. The way to stay sane. Spend some time indoors, spend some time outside. Thank goodness I have the garden is all I can say. As I said last month, in the beginning the plants would shriek as I came out with secateurs, shears and the hedge trimmer. Things have eased now – the incentive to prune has lessened, it has gotten colder and now, especially this week, I am gravitating to the lounge and the fire.

So much is flowering though, especially my wonderful collection of correas. I have a feeling I lost some over the past years but the remaining ones have spread and certainly light up the garden. Music to my ears is hearing the occasional call of the Eastern Spinebills as they flit in and out of my garden. During one of my local forays I had a field day taking these pictures.

This is of a park in Herbert Street that was renovated by the Knox City Council, to reduce the storm water flow and prevent flooding in the homes in Cardiff Street.

The first photo taken in 2010 shows the original planting, the second ten years later. This has been effective in general. In the first picture you can see wooden seats – these are still there in the second photo where playground equipment has been added. The third photo is of a spectacular callistemon I passed nearby with these gorgeous flowers, taken at the end of March. It is planted on the fence line and almost hidden from the road.



Original planting (Photo: Nicky Zanen)



10 years later (Photo: Nicky Zanen)



Callistemon species (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

In my last article I mentioned that I would include a photo taken near the main gate of Maranoa gardens. Tucked away behind the first row of trees, there she stands. I wonder if the neighbours realize.



Near the main gate of Maranoa gardens

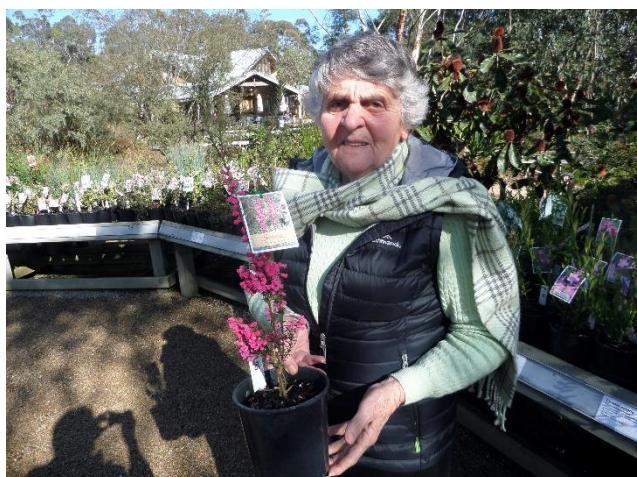
(Photo: Nicky Zanen)

News of members

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Shirley Carn. She did let us know last year that she wasn't well, but even so her death came upon us unexpectedly. Shirley was able to come to our first meeting this year. When we had news that Shirley was going into palliative care, a couple of our members brought her some beautiful flower arrangements. Thank you ladies.

I will miss her passion for native plants, and her generosity in sharing her knowledge as well as the variety of flowers she always brought in. I looked around my garden and realized just how strong the influence of both Shirley and Maureen has been. I have many epacries, spydiums and wahlenbergias, the latter I have recently fallen in love with as they creep around and fill great swathes of area.

The photo of Shirley was taken at Kuranga Native Plant Nursery when I bumped into her there, and when she coached me into selecting a better plant. Our condolences go to her family.



Shirley at Kuranga Native Plant Nursery

(Photo: Nicky Zanen)

We have also had news that Gus Zeilinger, who came to many of our outings, has just passed away also. Our condolences to Ngaire Turner.

Next day meeting.

I'm trying to get my head around this technology, and propose to hold a Zoom meeting next Tuesday 12th May starting at 10.30 am. I'll be getting in touch with our members and we'll see what we can do. The aim is to catch up with each other and to share what is flowering.

Stay safe and warm,

Nicky Zanen

Two plants that work well in my garden

Some of my favourite garden plants are the ones used for edging a garden to stop the Black Birds throwing mulch on my paths. I have attached a copy of two I use a lot of *Acacia lasiocarpa prostrate* and various *Scaevola* species.

Acacia lasiocarpa is a very decorative prostrate low spreading ground-cover with dense small fresh lime green foliage and masses of golden flowers in winter and spring. A versatile plant for full sun to part shade but will flower more profusely in the sun. Will grow happily in coastal dune environments, as this is one of its native habitats in Western Australia.

There are various cultivars of Fan Flowers in cultivation, derived from *Scaevola aemula* and other species. They all provide a very hardy and useful ground cover for the garden with massed spring and summer displays of decorative flowers in hues from white to blue and purple. Most specimens require good drainage and full sun to promote maximum display. They also do well in pots, hanging baskets and are easily propagated from cuttings, useful to establish garden edging.

Bev Fox



Scaevola species (Photo: Bev Fox)



Acacia lasiocarpa prostrate (Photo: Bev Fox)

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