



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)

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)

Combined Newsletters 2020

**AUGUST
-
SEPTEMBER**

ENQUIRIES

Email: foothills@apsvic.org.au

FOOTHILLS FACEBOOK PAGE

www.facebook.com/apsoothills

VISITORS WELCOME!



Membership Fees are now due.

Membership form and instructions can be located in this newsletter. The files are attached to the emailed newsletter.

DAY MEETING

A Zoom Meeting

On Tuesday 11 August 2020

10.30am

EVENING MEETING

A Zoom Meeting

On Wednesday 26 August

8pm

Foothills Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/apsfoothills

Hi Everyone,

This is certainly turning into a very tricky year meetings-wise!

We were placed into lockdown again in July, so we were unable to hold our AGM and Quiz as planned, and have had to postpone it again. We'll look into the feasibility of having it in August but holding physical meetings depends very much on the lockdown restrictions in place at the time, as well as cleaning, sanitising and social distancing requirements.

We do have the option of holding our AGM via a Zoom meeting in August, so we're looking into the logistics of that. The alternative is to postpone it until we can have a physical meeting later in the year and I'll be discussing the AGM options with the rest of the committee soon, so that we can make a decision, as well as come up with a more definite plan for the whole group for the rest of the year. In the meantime, we're in a bit of a holding pattern but hang in there and we'll let you know as soon as we can land!

We have been doing well with holding Zoom meetings for both the day and evening meetings. It's a good way to stay connected and as we get more confident using this medium, we are being able to create a bit more structure and have a bit more fun, e.g. sharing PowerPoint slideshows and showing plants, which makes things feel much more normal again. I joined the day Zoom meeting in July (took a longer morning tea break from my work than usual) and it was really good to be able to chat with members of our group whom I rarely get a chance to see and interact with - definitely one of the positives to have come out of the lockdowns and what Covid-19 has laid at our doors this year.

So, keep an eye out for information regarding the format of the AGM and when we will be holding it. Oh yes, and start brushing up on your quiz knowledge because even if we have to Zoom our

way to the end of the year, we can still do some fun stuff like have our quiz.

Keep well everyone and take care!

Janet Hodgkiss.

Foothills Pics of the Month

Our newsletter is one of the main ways we keep in touch with you and it has been invaluable in keeping connected with each other during this very strange year we've been having.

We haven't had much opportunity to show or share things with each other as we usually do at our meetings, but here's an easy and fun idea as to what you *can* do - you can submit an image to our newsletter and tell us a bit about it!

Below, you'll find some criteria to help make choosing and talking about your picture easier, as well as the guidelines for submitting your image.

Criteria:

- 1) Topic: My favourite, or current favourite, Australian native plant.
- 2) Select ONE picture.
- 3) Tell us a bit about it – what about it makes it your favourite? This can be a short and simple caption, a comment or a longer description.

What to do:

- 1) Email your picture to Kerry *before* the next newsletter deadline.

You will find Kerry's email address and the deadline date in the information panel that is included in every newsletter.

- 2) in the subject line of the email write: Foothills Pics of the Month.
- 3) Include your caption, comment or description.
- 4) Include your name so that we can credit your photo properly. Refer to pictures in this newsletter for correct format.

Looking forward to seeing your favourite Australian plant in next month's issue!

Janet Hodgkiss

Annual General Meeting and 2021 Committee

We are hoping to get our AGM behind us as soon as possible, be it a physical meeting or one via Zoom,

so that we can start planning what we want to do for the rest of the year. We'll let you know as soon as we have decided on the format and the date. Keep an eye out for reminders or notices about it.

** Don't forget that your *membership* has to be up to date to have voting rights. Your memberships are due now, so please pay your membership fees as soon as possible. Chris has provided helpful instructions on to how to fill in your membership forms which you will find attached/or in this newsletter.

** At our AGM, the current *committee* is dissolved and a new one elected. All the committee positions (Leader, Deputy Leader, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor and ordinary committee members), are declared vacant at this meeting, so if you would like to join the committee you can nominate yourself, or someone else (with their permission) for any of the positions.

You can email nominations to Janet or Nicky at foothills@apsvic.org.au or you can bring your nomination/s on the night.

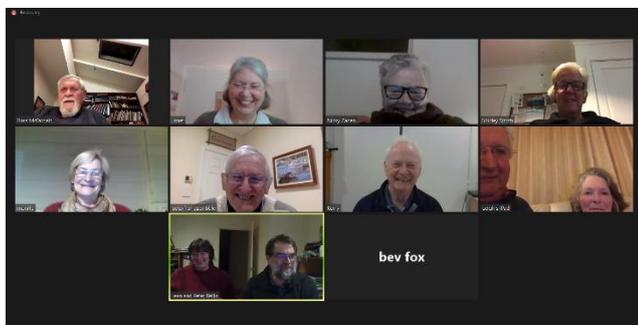
Please consider joining the committee, even as an ordinary member. Your ideas/suggestions will help keep the group vibrant and being able to share tasks when necessary, makes running the group so much easier. It's not an onerous task being on the committee, and if you are away on holidays or travelling, that can be easily accommodated, so don't let this put you off joining.

We meet four times a year, and our committee meetings are kept as short as possible so they never become tedious. At the meetings we plan our calendar, discuss possible speakers and activities, talk about how the group is going, and what we'd like to do as a group.

Janet Hodgkiss.

July Evening Zoom Meeting

Our second lockdown meant that we had to abandon our plans to have our AGM and our first physical meeting in months. All was not lost though as we quickly substituted it with a Zoom meeting. We have upgraded our subscription, so we don't have a time limit anymore which makes things a lot easier. This meeting ran for just over an hour and we had a good attendance too. As we're becoming more familiar with Zoom and getting the hang of this technology, we were even able to enjoy a short PowerPoint presentation that Nicky shared with us.



Ross, Janet, Nicky, Shirley: Monika, Peter G, Kerry, Leigh and Betty: Jean and Peter, Bev.

Ross has been directing Pam on areas of the garden that need tidying up and removing some obsolete or foreign plants, and they put in twenty or so new plants the previous weekend. The challenge is being able to get enough plants with buying plants being more restrictive. He also says his propagation skills seem to have deserted him, with both the seeds and cuttings.

Janet is enjoying some of the things that are flowering in her garden especially a *Scaevola* bought at the last FJC Rogers seminar. Other plants in the garden are just sitting, waiting for the days to get longer and warmer.

Nicky shared a PowerPoint presentation with some pictures of Bev's garden and Jan Hall's garden, and said that she spent some time in Jan's garden picking up tumble weeds. It was great to have this option in the Zoom meeting and made the meeting feel almost like 'old times' again.

Kerry has been pulling the odd weed out and doing a lot of house maintenance, especially painting. He also mentioned that, like Ross, he's also having trouble with his propagation skills.

Shirley has been gardening and playing golf and of course, staying home. She did get very decisive and a few plants have disappeared because they are either in the wrong spot or are in the wrong place and won't do well. While doing this, she discovered that she has about 50 *Correas* and most of them have doubled in size since the beginning of the year.

Monika has finally removed a *Correa calycina* var. *halmaturorum*, a species endemic to Kangaroo Island. She said she'd held off removing it because the birds loved it so much but it was so dry and the branches were just breaking off. She says her garden is looking lovely with lots of little things flowering now, including *Thryptomene* 'Mingenew' and the red *Epacris* 'Bega'.

Peter Gribble is still pruning *westringias* at his place, which he says is a long and involved process. He also thinks his garden waste service is trying to send him

a message as they left a big bundle after this last pickup, which was only 16 bundles, but there had been 38 bundles for the previous collection! When it comes to pruning, he says "Sometimes, you just have to be ruthless."

Betty's garden has been very wet so she's not doing much planting but making Christmas cards instead, and has good batch ready to go. Leigh has been doing stuff around the house, and going through cupboards but hasn't thrown out too much. He says at least he now knows what's in the cupboards! He also been ringing up and keeping in contact with people, especially those who are by themselves.

Peter gave Jean a camera with a macro setting and she's been using it to start a monthly record of the plants that are flowering in their garden. In the last few days, she's also been playing with taking photos of water droplets on plants. Peter says they've put a few new plants in, replaced edging and shifted a few cubic metres of dirt, and done some repotting and weeding. He says he's been reluctant to get the hedge trimmer out because everything is flowering like crazy but the plants are growing like crazy too! When the wattles are finished flowering, then they'll get a bit of a haircut.

Bev joined us too but as she doesn't have a webcam, we unfortunately couldn't see her. We also couldn't hear her which was a pity but I think she could see and hear us.

The way things are going with restrictions and distancing requirements, it is possible that we may not be able to have physical meetings for quite a while still, so if you are able to join these Zoom meetings, then please do. It'll be lovely to see you and as you have seen with Bev, even if you don't have a webcam, you can still join in.

See you next time!

Janet Hodgkiss

Scaevola chases away the winter blues

I have this beautiful *Scaevola porocarya* (Striate-fruit *Scaevola*) growing in a pot in my tiny courtyard garden. I got the plant (tubestock size if I recall correctly) at the Last FJC Rogers Seminar on Goodeniaceae and it seems to be coping well with the rather extreme conditions in the garden – in summer the garden is in full sun and gets hot, and in winter the shadow of the house puts it into shade all day, and it can get quite cold too.

As you all know, I live in a rental property so my entire garden is in pots, and pants in pots have to be

nurtured a little more than those planted in the garden because they are totally reliant on you for food and water. I generally feed everything with a little sprinkle of slow release fertiliser formulated for natives in spring, and then later in the year when they look like they might be hungry again. As you can see, I don't follow a strict schedule and I like using granules because it is an easy and un-messy way to supply essential nutrients to plants in pots. Whenever I repot anything though, the potting mix includes a good proportion of homemade compost which keep the potting medium in good condition. If my plants look like they need a quick boost in between slow-release feedings, then they get a drink of liquid fertiliser, an apology for any neglect and then loads of encouragement and love!

To ensure my pots don't dry out in summer, they all get a good watering in the mornings, especially on our 35°C+ days, and they all stand in saucers so that any excess water can be absorbed during the day.

In winter the story is a bit different. I water very rarely during winter because we usually get enough rain, although I do check my pots every few days to be sure that the soil is still a bit damp. Those endless grey days don't always mean that it's rained and your pots can still dry out!

I have learnt to up-end all the saucers in winter because while a plant suffering from dehydration can be saved if it's not left too late, it is impossible to resurrect a completely drowned plant whose roots have started to rot.



***Scaevola porocarya* Striate-fruit Scaevola**

Scaevola porocarya, from WA, is an upright shrub with un-ribbed, growing 0.2-1.5m high. The flowering stems on my plant seem to have a drooping habit but I am not sure if this is the norm, or a result of the shadier winter conditions. Either way, I like the willowy look.

The light blue flowers appear in winter and spring, are quite large (2-3cm across) and have the hairy indusium which is characteristic of the family. The flat narrow leaves are 2-6cm long, up to 1cm wide and may have entire or slightly toothed edges.

If you have well drained sandy clay soils in your garden, then you might like to try this in your own garden. You won't be disappointed!



**Willowy, graceful flower stems
(*Scaevola porocarya* photos: Janet Hodgkiss)**

Some of my Favourites

Dodonaea sinuolata

Back in the late 1980s I took home a bench specimen of *Dodonaea adenophora*, now called *D. sinuolata*. It was easy to propagate. I planted it in a very dry well drained position. It took many years to reach a mature size. Cuttings from this plant have grown to mature size very quickly. The plant takes full sun to semi shade.



Dodonaea sinuolata (Photo: Kerry Davis)

Olearia homolepis

Because I have a small garden this plant suits, not too large and can be pruned back. The flowers are showy and brighten up the garden.



Olearia homolepis (Photo: Kerry Davis)

Grevillea synapheae

Another great plant for a small garden. It is a beautiful shrub that produces creamy yellow flowers in profusion. I still have the original plant which is over 10 years old. It is growing out from under other shrubs. I found plants exposed to full sun usually lasted only one to two years. The plants I have placed around the garden with some protection are surviving well.



Grevillea synapheae (Photo: Kerry Davis)

Rhodanthe anthemoides

Back in the 1980s I could grow this plant successfully, however with the drier seasons I could not keep it alive. I have been growing a stock plant successfully in the fernery.

This year this plant has grown well in the garden because of the consistent rainfall this year. I like the white flowers as they give colour definition to other surrounding flowering plants.



Rhodanthe anthemoides (Photo: Kerry Davis)

Kerry Davis

Foothills Facebook Competition

In July we ran another photographic competition on our Facebook page, with entrants submitting photos of grevilleas. The prize was a 4kg tub of Bush Tucker. The competition was open to everyone and in total we had ten photos posted. The winner, chosen by the Foothills committee, was Brad Bell, with his photo of Grevillea 'Mt. Tamboritha'. Brad fulfilled all the criteria of Like the page, Share the post and submit a named grevillea photo.



Australian Plants Society Foothills Group Inc ...

Published by Elizabeth Triggs [?]
· 28 July · 🌐

APS Foothills are so pleased to announce Brad Bell has won our Grevillea Photo Competition with this photo of Grevillea Mt. Tamboritha. Congratulations Brad and Thank You to all our entrants.

📍 Tag photo 📍 Add location ✎ Edit

1,326

People reached

118

Engagements

Boost post

👍❤️ 18

2 comments 1 share

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share 🌐

Most relevant ▾



Brad Bell Thank you so much guys, I might even fertilise the poor thing now!

Like · Reply · Message · 5d



1



Deb Mc Congrats Brad, well deserved. 🏆

Like · Reply · Message · 5d



1



Comment as Australian PI...



www.facebook.com/apsfoothills



Grevillea 'Mt. Tamboritha' – winning Facebook entry by Brad Bell

Out and About

As I sit in front of the keyboard the sun is going down. Today is Sunday 2 August and more restrictions have been imposed on us. Where our Covid 19 figures are high, this is nothing as the chaos faced by so many countries currently; America, the UK, Spain, the Czech Republic, Sweden, South Africa, and the list goes on. We are incredibly lucky.

Having to be home so much more I now have an appreciation of how much sun comes into my house and also which areas in the garden don't get sun at all during the middle of winter. There are oddities too – I have 3 flowers on my Rhododendron – way out of flowering time. My Acacia 'Scarlet Blaze' doesn't look anywhere near flowering yet but people in Melbourne have been putting pictures on Facebook (on the Australian Native Plant Enthusiasts Facebook page) and I thought I saw a native frangipani flowering near my place, but mine hardly looks to have even buds at the moment. The Cockatoos have been chomping away on it though, giving it a good prune. It has also lost a lot of leaves – they have landed in my fishpond, so I know!

Nicky Zanen

Day Meeting notes

My orbit has decreased in range, but observations keep coming in thick and fast. At our next day meeting I will prepare another short PowerPoint presentation for our members based on local wanderings. The PowerPoint worked very well with our last Zoom meeting, and all our members are offered the challenge of having a go themselves. So if you would like to do a short presentation, let me know.

At our last Zoom we were pleased to welcome the voice of Sandra. I was going to say hopefully we'll get to meet you soon Sandra, but as things stand today it will be some months off yet. Thanks for coming on board.

We also had Janet, our leader, taking part. Our AGM is being postponed and there was much discussion about making face masks.

I struggled to log on as host so I missed the chat beforehand, but did hear Merele saying something to the effect that cats are forest animals and need to climb to be safe from their predators and to be at a height where they can see their prey on the ground. Information that makes sense but that we don't necessarily know.

Carole told us she has (3) hoveas flowering and these are inclined to grow too tall but come back beautifully if cut back after flowering. She remembers Shirley saying you cannot have just one *Chorizema cordatum*, but must have three. She was heavily influenced by Shirley, as seen in the many epacrises she grows. Carole also showed us a pimelea which is very showy, spreads low and the birds. She also mentioned a dampiera that has flowered all the time since November.

Merele has two *Banksia praemorsa* full of flower buds, one has 27, the other 30 odd. They are just beginning to colour up. Her Payne's Thryptomene looks spectacular with its lovely bright flowers and has kept going for months. She mentioned a *Grevillea oleoides*, which is renamed *Grevillea speciosa ssp oleoides*. She saw this plant first at a nursery in Thomastown in the late 1970s. It has been a brilliant season for it and grows three quarters of the time in shade. Merele also mentioned that unfortunately the Noisy Miners are keeping all the little birds out of her garden.

Richard and Robin are really pleased with the layout of their garden and now have the challenge of deciding what to plant where and with whom. Peter

Smith, the bobcat operator, was great to work with. They added brick paving and a grassed paving area that will take a car.



Grassed paving area

(Photo: supplied by Richard Maddever)

Helen showed us what could be an *Einadia nutans* which has sprung up in her garden. I have taken a photo of mine Helen – I hope this helps you confirm that id.

I'm getting to be quite a fan of these Zoom meetings because they enable us to keep in face contact, all our members contribute to the conversation and I find them uplifting as well.

Nicky

From the secretary

My visits to the mailbox have brought forth many renewals. Thank you all. We have also received a couple of new members – a very warm welcome to all of you. I hope you can join us in the upcoming Zoom meetings, and that by our Christmas breakup we get to meet you all in person, if not earlier. Welcome to Anne and Leo West from St Kilda, Dallas and Bernard Boulton from Ringwood East and Rose Carn from Monbulk.

We have also received a letter from Kath Mackey who is not renewing due to ill health. We are sorry to hear this but wish Kath all the very best and hope that this is a temporary setback. Kath was introduced to our group through Joan Rand and has been attending day meetings for well over 5 years.

On a much brighter note, our Ross McDonald celebrates his 80th birthday this month. Ross is one of our founder members and clearly remembers the first SGAP Foothills meeting which he attended with his daughter in a baby basket. He is now well into

grandfather hood. Pam also celebrated a big Nought birthday recently, so wishing you both all the very best and HAPPY BIRTHDAY McDonalds.

Our membership subscriptions became due on the 1st July. Many of you have renewed and so far we have no mysterious deposits – thank you for keeping Chris informed, and thank you for your renewals. For those who haven't yet, please do so as soon as possible.

Nicky – phone 0401975191

News from our members

Margaret James

I found the photo of the gang-gang cockatoos in Greensborough – I've seen them in Rosanna Parklands in the past, but I haven't been walking enough lately to discover if they are still there. I often hear kookaburras and I've had tawny frogmouths in my trees. The lorikeets have been pruning my gum trees lately, but they don't clear up after themselves!

Peter Gribble

As an alternative to actual visits to Janette given her aged care home lockdown the Chaplains suggested a digital alternative and I came up with the idea of a tour of Janette's garden. *Now I reckon that is a fantastic idea. Nicky*

Visit to Yarrawonga presentation

Nicky and Bev visited Jan Hall in Yarrawonga when restrictions eased and popped into the gardens of Barbara Buchanan in Benalla and Judy & Mal Homes in Mulwala. The gardening conditions in this part of Victoria and NSW are certainly much more challenging than locally. Nicky also included a couple of photos from Bev Fox's garden in The Basin. To finish the show Nicky also showed a couple of screen shots off a Facebook post relating to fences being built in Sherbrooke National Park to protect plants against deer.



Jan Hall garden (Photo: Nicky Zanen)



Barbara Buchanan garden (Photo: Nicky Zanen)



Judy & Mal Homes garden (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

Information on Membership Renewal 2020/21

- To be a member of Foothills you must be a member of the parent body – Australian Plants Society Victoria Inc (APS Vic).
- It is possible and preferable to renew your financial membership of both APS Vic and Foothills at the same time. Your APS Vic membership will be forwarded to the APS Vic Membership Officer for you.
- If you have already renewed your APS Vic membership directly or via another branch, there is a box to tick on our form. You will then only need to renew your Foothills membership.

The price of membership renewal

- APS Vic membership fees have not increased this financial year.
- It is possible to request an exemption from payment of APS Vic fees for 2020/21 if you are suffering financial hardship caused by COVID-19. Tick the relevant box on the membership form if applicable.
- Foothills membership fees remain the same, without exemptions. Our membership fees have not increased since 2015. It is cheaper to receive your newsletter electronically and we encourage you to do so, to cut down on the work involved in postage and so that you see the newsletter in glorious colour.
- It is also possible to pay for the quarterly national newsletter called 'Australian Plants'. This is an optional extra.

When to pay and providing your details

- Please pay promptly and preferably by the end of July, to cut down on the time it takes to chase up on people.
- No matter how you choose to pay your renewal, please complete **the MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM** and include it with your payment if paying directly to the treasurer or by post. If paying by electronic transfer, or directly at the bank, post or email the form to celarkin@bigpond.com.au

Ways to pay memberships

1. By Electronic Transfer. Please include your surname and initials as reference and/or membership no. Account Name: Aust. Plants Society (Foothills) Inc BSB no. 633-000 (Bendigo Bank), Account No. 1163 99387 Then scan and email your completed membership form, and the date, amount banked and reference, to Chris Larkin at celarkin@bigpond.com, or email your confirming details (name, address, phone number, email address) and the date, amount banked and reference, to Chris Larkin at celarkin@bigpond.com

2. Make a deposit at any Bendigo Bank branch using the bank account number above. No charge will be made at a Bendigo Bank branch. Deposits can be made at other banks, but a fee may be charged. Then email Chris with your details as above.

3. Pay at the July meetings with cash or cheque. The Treasurer will attend the daytime meeting on 7th July to accept payments, but not at the night meeting AGM on 22nd July if we are having meetings by that time. If you want to pay at the night meeting, then please give your money and completed membership form in a sealed envelope to Chris Larkin, the treasurer.

4. By Post. Post your completed membership form and cheque (made payable to APS Foothills Inc.), to APS Foothills, PO Box 65, Boronia, 3155.

Any Questions? Call Chris on 9752 7837 or email celarkin@bigpond.com



APS Foothills Membership 2020/21

MEMBERS SHOULD COMPLETE THE RENEWAL FORM EACH YEAR,
TO HELP US KEEP YOUR CONTACT DETAILS UP-TO-DATE.

RENEWAL/NEW SUBSCRIPTION FORM

Note: This is a combined membership form for both APS Victoria and the APS Foothills Group.

If you complete this form, please disregard any APS Membership Form that was sent out to you with your APS Victoria "Growing Australian" magazine in June.

Your details and the appropriate payment will be forwarded to APS Victoria by Foothills.

I wish to renew my membership or join APS Foothills for the first time.

Title/s _____ First name/s _____

Surname/s _____

No. and Street/Road _____

Suburb/Town _____ Postcode _____

Telephone _____ Mobile _____

Email address _____

I agree to be bound by the Rules and Bylaws of the association. Signature _____

Membership of APS Victoria

Please tick the appropriate box below. Membership includes one copy of the 'Growing Australian' newsletter each quarter.

Single membership \$35

Family/Household membership \$40

Student Membership \$26

I am a Life Member of APS Victoria \$0

I have renewed my APS Vic membership directly with APS Vic or via another group \$0

OPTIONAL: 'Australian Plants' publication of ANPSA delivered with 'Growing Australian' \$15

SUB TOTAL (APS Vic Inc.) \$

I wish to apply for an exemption from paying APS Vic fees due to COVID-19 financial hardship.

Please **ADD** membership of APS Foothills Group Inc.

Single/Family/Household - electronic newsletter \$20

Single/Family/Household - posted newsletter \$30

COMBINED TOTAL \$

For payment methods, please refer to page 10

Jean and Ross entered our Facebook Grevillea Photo competition and submitted these images.

We loved the detail you captured in your closeups. Great pictures guys!



Grevillea sericea (Photo: Jean Bellis)



Grevillea insignis (Photo: Ross MacDonald)

APS FOOTHILLS INC.

PO Box 65
BORONIA 3155

ENQUIRIES

Email: foothills@apsvic.org.au

COMMITTEE

Leader: Janet Hodgkiss
Deputy Leader: Elizabeth Triggs
Secretary: Nicky Zanen
Treasurer: Chris Larkin
Newsletter Editor: Kerry Davis
Day Meeting Liaison: Nicky Zanen
Other Members: Pam Yarra

MEETING DETAILS

DAY Meeting

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

Date: 2nd Tuesday of the month except Nov, Dec, Jan.

Time: 10.30am

Enquiries: Nicky Zanen 040 197 5191

EVENING Meeting

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

Date: 4th Wednesday of the month, except Dec, Jan.

Time: 7.45pm

VISITORS WELCOME!



APS Foothills Inc. A0013126K

September Newsletter 2020

DAY MEETING

**Ann Beadell Hwy across the Great
Victorian Desert**

Monika & Rolf Herrmann

A Zoom Meeting

Tuesday 8 September 2020

10.30am

EVENING MEETING

AGM and Quiz – via Zoom

Wednesday 23 September

8pm

Foothills Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/apsfoothills

Hi Everyone,

The end of August certainly brought with it a lot of blustery weather and some rather fierce winds that caused quite a bit of havoc. Being all locked up at home with coronavirus restrictions, and then having the weather give us beating and knocking out our power for quite while too in some areas, seemed a bit unfair, but at this point, and having weathered nearly six months of various lockdown restrictions, what's a bit of 'Melbourne weather' to us hardy Melbourne folk anyway?!

Spring is usually an uncertain time, with winter not very keen to relinquish its grip and seeming to fight the inexorable onset of spring, so the variable weather is to be expected. Growing up in South Africa, in what was then the Transvaal, we had a regular phenomenon at this time of the year, the 'August wind'. It was always a good month or so of very gusty blustery wind which whipped up (and still whips up), a lot of dust from the dry earth. That part of the country gets no rain at all through the winter, so the savannah/bushveld is well and truly parched by the time spring comes. When there were still active goldmines and mine dumps within the greater Johannesburg area, the yellow dust that was swept off the dumps added to the red earth dust, making August even more unpleasant. Nowadays the mine dumps have all been reworked or revegetated, so dust from them isn't such a problem anymore, and even though the August wind is still unpleasant, people know that it is a prelude to the spring rains and more settled weather which is hopefully not far off. So, I'm taking that view too... that our current wild weather is just a transition, and one that that won't last forever, to better and calmer things all round.

We've been doing well with our Zoom meetings, and will keep these up for as long as we need to. We've certainly got the hang of it now, so rather than put off our AGM until we can perhaps meet in person,

we'll be holding it at our next evening meeting in September. We'll send out the agenda and all the relevant annual reports a few days prior in an email reminder, as we obviously won't be able to hand them out on the night as we usually do. Please keep a lookout for this in your inbox.

As usual we'll also choose our new committee at our AGM. Liz and Pam are stepping down from the committee, so if you wish to nominate yourself or someone else for a position on the committee, we'd love to have you on board. You can let us know on the night, or you can let Nicky and I know beforehand.

We'll have our quiz after our AGM, so have your pencils and paper at the ready. We'll still have a prize for the top scorers, although you'll have to wait a bit until we can give it you in person. Hopefully, that will be before the end of the year!

I'm definitely hoping that we'll still be able to hold our end of year get-together at Yarran Dheran as planned, but as so many things depend on the coronavirus situation, we'll just have to wait and see. In the meantime, take care and see you soon!

Janet Hodgkiss.

August Evening Meeting Report

In April, Miriam Ford was going to talk to us on the Mint Bushes and Allied Genera, which was the topic chosen for the FJC Rogers Seminar this year, but that evening talk was cancelled due to the lockdown restrictions.



The evening Zoom crew.

Instead, she gave us a lovely presentation at our August evening meeting via Zoom, and talked about specific members of a subfamily within the family Lamiaceae, the Prostantheroideae. It's a big subfamily, consisting of two tribes made up of seventeen genera. Some of the genera have only a couple of species, while Prostanthera has the most

species, followed by Westringia. These two genera are the most popular in cultivation.

Prostanthera lasianthos is the type specimen for the genus and was the first named species. It is the largest of the mint bushes and is the most widespread and is quite variable.

Species fall into two categories based on flower morphology, bell-shaped or tubular. Bell-shaped flowers have a short corolla tube that is narrow at the base and widens to a bell shape. The upper lip is broad and upright, two-lobed or notched and shorter than the lower lip. The lower lip is three-lobed with the middle lobed slightly longer.

The calyx is two-lipped and this is distinguishing feature between Prostanthera and Westringia. The tubular flowers have a longer corolla tube with the upper being concave and the lower lip is not longer than the upper lip. The different flower types are correlated with pollinators, the tubular ones are adapted to bird pollination and the bell-shaped flowers, beetles and flies.

Prostanthera occurs across most of Australia except for the northern parts of the country. Many species are local or endemic to small areas and are therefore vulnerable e.g. *Prostanthera galbraithiae* which is a Victorian mint bush and local to a small area in East Gippsland which suffered from the bushfires.

Propagation is very easy from cuttings but not so easy from seed.

Some species are susceptible to phytophthora and so grafted specimens do better. They are usually grafted onto *Westringia fruticosa*.

Growing conditions of Prostanthera: morning sun, dappled sunlight but not the hot western sun – some do cope but need extra water; good as an understory plant and grows well under eucalypts and wattles; needs good drainage and leaf litter or leaf mould.

Westringia is the next most popular genus. The calyx is five lobed compared to the two lobes of Prostanthera. Most flowers are axillary and some are clustered towards the ends of the shoots. Leaves are lanceolate, elliptical, linear, narrow-ovate, they have smooth edges and occur in whorls of three or four.

They occur in a diverse range of climates, most species like dappled sun and good drainage, and many have a tolerance for low water and tough conditions.

Miriam rounded out her talk with an outline of the FJC Rogers Seminar. The talks that would normally take place are going to be presented in the form of webinars over three evenings, with the speakers being paired up on each evening. Each talk will be

about 30 minutes with about 5-10 mins for questions.

At this stage, they are not sure if the garden visits are going to go ahead at this time, and plant sales may be online, as this part will be governed by whatever coronavirus restrictions are still in place.

Janet Hodgkiss



***Prostanthera magnifica* with its large shield-like calyx. These persistent calyces intensify in colour as they age. (Photo: Janet Hodgkiss)**

Next evening meeting, 23rd September 2020, 8pm AGM and Quiz – via Zoom.

The AGM and Quiz will take place via a Zoom meeting. Please look out for the email reminder we will send you nearer the time – it will contain the Zoom meeting link and all the relevant documentation, including the agenda, annual reports etc.

HAPPY HIBBERTIAS

There are currently many yellow flowers in the garden, but the hibbertias deserve some press, especially *Hibbertia serrata*.



***Hibbertia serrata* (Photo: Pam Yarra)**

Hibbertia serrata from the south west of Western Australia likes sun to thrive. For those who know my garden, it is planted in the bed directly in front of Jim's shed. Many, many years ago this was a vegetable garden, as it got some sun and as a result the soil has been turned over and fertilised. Some time ago BC (before cancer and before Covid-19) I decided to relocate some Anigozanthos and prune back large bushes. However, I did a "Shirley Carn" and removed all large and medium bushes, except *Hibbertia serrata*. It was quite straggly, but at the end of the bed and deserved to remain. I staked it, as you can see in the photo. It has been flowering prolifically for weeks and there are still many buds to open. There are new shoots on woody branches and I will prune branches back to them and place soft hardwood cuttings in my hot house. While it grows in grey or black sand over limestone, laterite or granite-based soils, it is thriving in the old vegetable patch, where the soil has been modified. I suspect it would not do well in clay. So, with sun, after being sheltered and shaded, it has the freedom to survive and thrive.

Both *Hibbertia dentata* (cream form) a climber from the east coast of Australia and *Hibbertia grossulariifolia*, a rambling ground cover from the south west of Western Australia prefer some shade and moisture. Both are in several different locations in the garden and from my experience, *Hibbertia grossulariifolia* may die back, if summer is too dry.

Pam Yarra



***Hibbertia dentata* (Photo: Pam Yarra)**



***Hibbertia grossulariifolia* (Photo: Pam Yarra)**

The Strappy Difference

Before Bushland Nursery changed hands, I was able to get hold of quite a number of 3-inch pots of a lomandra called 'Misty Green'. I can only assume they have been done by tissue culture because they always have flowers and from a very young age. It is a selection of *Lomandra confertifolia ssp rubiginosa* which I am hoping will remain a smaller plant than others of the rubiginosa forms I have tried.

I am keen on strap-leafed plants in the garden for accent. The distinct difference of strappy plants to other plants when repeated along a path or throughout the garden can punctuate the scene giving a sense of cohesion to the garden. Lomandras will do the job but they can be mixed or replaced with other strappy plants like forms of orthrosanthus, dianella (beware of tasmanica's

invasive nature), stypantra, thelionema caespitosum, patersonia etc.



***Lomandra 'Misty Green'* (Photo: Chris Larkin)**

Well managed grasses can also be used to similar affect. It has taken me quite a while to learn how to manage grasses for a great look. Shirley Carn did tell me years ago they needed to be pruned hard annually but I was slow to take the advice. Now that I do prune them annually I am really pleased with the result and so much so in my recent renovation of the big pond I have chosen to use a repeat of grasses to soften the edge and give a natural feel. Edging a pond is a good use of a grass like *Poa labillardierei*. Cheryl Southall used grasses as a strappy of choice around her ponds and the soft fall and flutter of the foliage in the breeze was quite beautiful.



***Orthrosanthus polystachus* (Photo: Chris Larkin)**



Poa labillardierei (Photo: Chris Larkin)

The choice of which strap plant to use will depend to some extent on growing conditions. I have not found it easy to grow patersonias anywhere. The size of the plant needs to be considered. I just removed, admittedly with some assistance, a number of plants of *Lomandra hystrix*, a plant from Queensland and NSW, which can grow exceedingly large. The biggest of these plants took 11 person hours over several sessions to remove. There are definitely small forms of lomandras that are useful such as our local *Lomandra filiformis ssp coriacea*, or the blue foliated *Lomandra collina*. And then there is position, position, position. Which plant is the right look for the position in the garden. For instance, apart from around a pond, I feel grasses are best repeated, maybe even close planted, on the edge of a path for ease of maintenance. They also look good planted at the base of a tree.

There are a great many strap plants to choose from; different sizes, leaf widths, foliage and flower colour. They are a varied group of plants with a wonderful distinct difference in basic growth habit and form from your typical shrub. For this reason they are very useful garden subjects.

Chris Larkin



Gastrolobium celsianum (Photo: Richard Maddever)

Next day meeting – 10.30 am Tuesday 8th September 2020.

We are getting away from Melbourne with Monika and Rolf Herrmann who are taking us with them on the Ann Beadell Hwy across the Great Victorian Desert and Goods Track. They shared this trip with us in June 2011, and it is a good opportunity for us to revisit this area again.

Last day meeting

Was it the weather that had improved significantly that meant many of our members stayed away? We had a super Zoom meeting with Miriam Ford, chairman of the FJC Rogers 2020 committee as our guest, and a short presentation on gardens around the Boronia area.

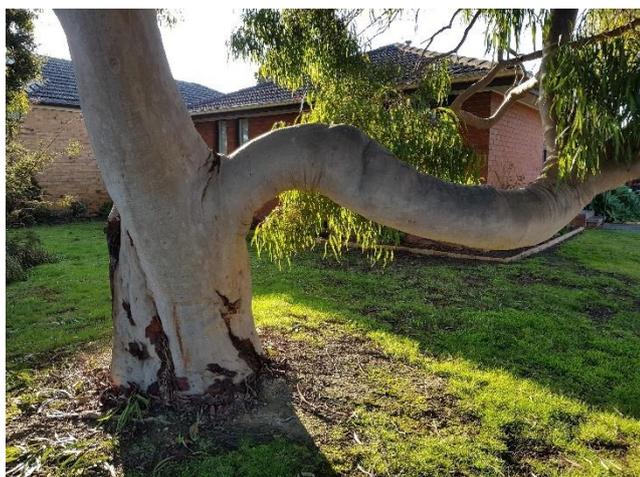
Miriam gave us an update of where the FJC Rogers 2020 seminar is at, subject to Covid19 restrictions. Basically the lectures will be available online and Miriam outlined proposed garden visits and sought some feedback from us. Final arrangements will only

be made at the end of September when we have a better idea of restrictions.

Then Nicky took us for a quick trip around Boronia, visiting Marion Dux's garden, the innovative ways gardeners tackle fence lines and new plantings by Knox City Council. The nature strips down Boronia Road near the Boronia Veterinary Clinic have recently been planted with mostly indigenous plants by the Knox City Council. These have included epacris. Also, along Boronia Road is a magnificent gum tree, probably a *Corymbia*, with a horizontal branch that just begs for a person to ride on it, and further down a scrappy looking *Spyridium parvifolium* which closeup is a super plant.



Marion Dux's garden (Photo: Nicky Zanen)



Corymbia (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

Before the Stage 4 lockdown Nicky found a recycling station at the Bayswater Officeworks which accepted not only printer toner but also batteries, computer parts and mobile phone accessories.



***Spyridium parvifolium* (Photo: Nicky Zanen)**

The presentation finished with a stop at Kuranga under the statue of the grand Eagle and a pot spilling over with Cousin It.



Kuranga Nursery (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

Members then shared comments about a lot of plants that are tough and grow well in dry shady conditions. These included *Hovea elliptica*, *Asterolasia hexapetala* (unlike its name a lot of the flowers actually have 5 petals), *Phebalium stenophyllum*, *Olearia podolepisa*, a white form of *Hardenbergia violacea*, *Eriostemon australasius* and *Guichenotia*. Several wattles were also shown, including *Acacia covenyi* (which Monika associates the name with 'witches coven'), and *Acacia imbricata* and *Acacia trigonophylla*.

Ross mentioned several of his grevilleas are flowering, and he has both *Hovea acutifolia* which Bev likes with its rusty underside of leaves, and *Hovea longifolia*. Helen drew our attention to the *Pimelea nivea* with its green upper leaves and lighter undersides and *Hypocalymma angustifolium*.

Before we finished our Zoom call Monika mentioned that she has filled a jar with the leaves of *Backhousia citriodora* which she uses for tea. Chopped very finely the leaves can be added to shortbread biscuits and to fruit salads. Delicious whichever way you use them!

Nicky Zanen



Grevillea hedge (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

Out and About

The Knox City Council have recently begun labelling trees with "Introducing our Elders" Signs which gives the tree's botanical name, a nickname and its age. I love this initiative and have taken photos of many of these. The one I have submitted to Kerry is "Pepper", a 50 year old *Eucalyptus nicholii* or peppermint gum!

Much to my surprise, at the Knox Aquatic Centre, the Council have planted many grevilleas and a verticordia amongst the eucalypts. These are tough conditions and I am intrigued to see how they will perform.

Ross McDonald mentioned that he has been purchasing a lot of plants online lately but is looking for more. One of my friends placed an order with Conservation Collection Native Plant Nursery, Somerville and was most impressed with their service, and their pricing. Their phone number is 0457 001 784.

Stringybark Festival 2020

In lieu of Covid-19 the annual Stringybark Festival is being run online. The Knox City Council called for expressions of interest and on behalf of APS Foothills I put in an application. We heard late Friday that our bid was successful but we don't know yet what is going to be involved. Watch this space.

But in putting in a bid it was time to revisit the origins of Stringybark.

The term 'Stringybark' was coined by the late Dr Merv Turner for the annual flower show held by the Society for Growing Australian Plants Foothills Group. These were held at the Ferntree Gully High School in the early 80s and to attract more members of the general public, the Group trialled holding the show at Ferntree Gully Community Centre in 1983. In 1984 we expanded our activities by inviting craft sales and other groups to participate. By 1985 we realised the enormity of organising such a show and looked to having to either cut down on our activities or bow out. Dick Dare, who was then the landscape architect of Knox Council, approached us with an offer of the Knox Council taking over the organisation of the festival with SGAP's continued involvement with the flower show, gum nut crafts and associated activities.

Rob McMurray's involvement with Stringybark came in at this time although Dick Dare was primarily involved with the Stringybark Festival and Rob with the Knox Arts and Craft Festival held earlier in the year. We received a letter dated 24/11/1989 from Robert McMurray saying that Knox City Council were relocating Stringybark to Rowville Community Centre and changing the name to Stringybark Bush Festival.

The name of our group was changed in November 2000 from Society for Growing Australian Plants Foothills Group to Australian Plants Society Foothills Group. The APS Foothills group was involved with Stringybark Festival till 2012.

Nicky Zanen

Bits and Pieces

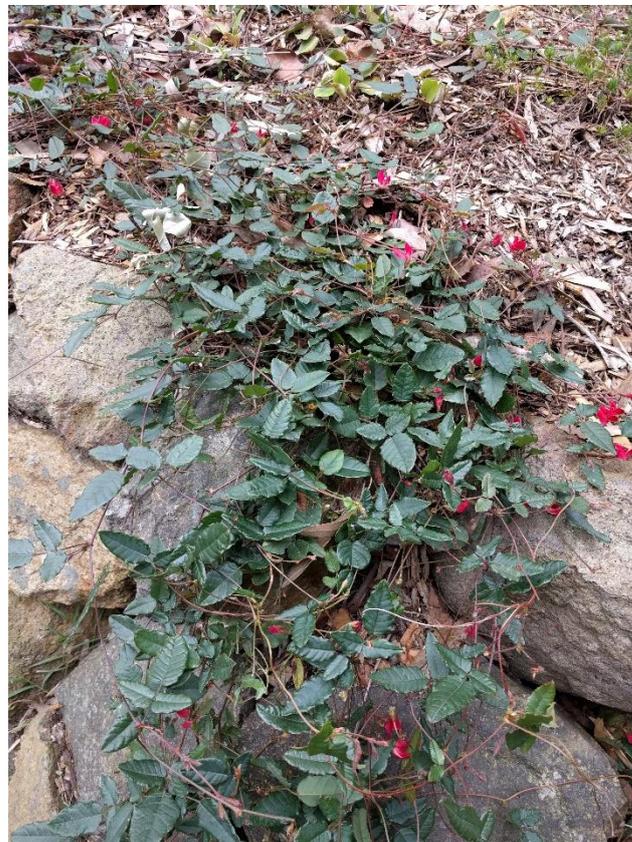
I'm sure everyone's gardens will be declaring the arrival of spring.

Here in my garden, a wonderful aroma is wafting through the air, announcing the beginning of flowering of the boronias. Two *Boronia heterophylla x megastigma* 'Purple Jarrod', that I bought from Karwarra, which are now both about a metre high, have deep maroon flowers and are beginning their display. Next to one of them I have *B. megastigma* 'Lutea' and *B. heterophylla* 'Lipstick'. Tucked away next to the wall of our back door and barely seen behind other plants, is a small *B. megastigma*, the Brown Boronia and the most fragrant; that's when you notice it. Boronias make a wonderful small spray of aroma for a vase indoors. Reading about the boronias, it mentions that they almost all need well-drained soils that don't dry out, dappled shade and importantly, some root protection from plants, rocks or logs. They are content tucked in among other plants for some protection, too.



***Boronia* 'Purple Jarrod' (Photo: Monika Herrmann)**

On a sharp slope at the back door, the delicate, twin small red flowers of *Kennedia eximia* (the name meaning 'out of the ordinary') are trailing over the stone wall. This dainty kennedia is only a light trailer and needs some attachment. I use metal prongs (used for the plastic irrigation pipes) to keep it in order.



***Kennedia eximia* (Photo: Monika Herrmann)**

Another plant I have come to really like is *Dodonea sinuolata* that takes quite heavy shade under the trees. The lovely rusty-red flowers and light foliage is most attractive. (see Kerry's beautiful photo in a previous newsletter)

Here in my garden it is still very wet in a few patches, despite the steep slope, where the water has been cascading down. This run-off from the hill hasn't happened for many long years. The excess moisture is not suiting many plants that have been planted for dry conditions and a few are succumbing such as several recently planted *Dampiera stricta* and the ends of the foliage of a once robust *Scaevola striata* were looking quite browned. A couple of prostrate eremophilas, *Eremophila glabra* 'Pancake' are slowly dying and also *E. densifolia*, which was going well, sitting high and dry in-between rocks. A

few surprises but most plants looking healthy and happy.

We were fortunate not to have any more trees roll out after the last severe wind storms a few days ago. Number 11, a large Bundy box or Long-leaved box (*Eucalyptus goniocalyx*) came down the week before (I think that I said that it was a stringybark at the zoom meeting?) Again, we were in luck as it missed our lemon tree.

Is it time to move?

Monika Herrmann



Scenes from Ross and Pam McDonalds Garden

Ross McDonald



Photos taken by Pam McDonald



***Grevillea endlicheriana* (Photo: Jean Bellis)**

Last year I cut back the *Grevillea endlicheriana* and was concerned that I have been too severe with it. It has rewarded me with the best display of flowers it has ever had.

It has been such a joy to look out the window at it over the winter months.

Jean Bellis

Bee Hotels

At our church we run something called Messy Church every two months. Messy Church is based on a Bible reading and activities are planned around it such as crafts, cooking, science etc. We then have a short worship service and end the evening with a meal. During locked down we have had to move to doing all our church services and activities online or not having them.

I want to share with you a project that I have been working on for our October Messy Church which was inspired by the Insect hotel that Peter made at an evening meeting a couple of years ago

The Bible reading is Genesis and God's creation of the World . We have planned activities that look at taking care of our world and the animals and all living creatures in it.

I have undertaken to share Insect and Bee hotels as an activity for people to do.

Peter found the link to the Gardening Australia segment on why we need Bee Hotels and the importance of our native Bees.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zH7YorqNeXY>

This is the link if anyone is interested.

I then tried to find a link that showed how to make a simple bee hotel that people could make at home with what they had and that children could do. Some of the videos showed building very elaborate hotels that required you to be carpenter and others used items that would be expensive or hard to find. Some of them would have been great places for snakes to hide in. In the end I found a simple idea but have decided to make my own video.



Here is the photo of my Bee hotel. I got a clean dry tin. Then I have cut long strips of newspaper that I have rolled up and placed in the can. I have wrapped some paperbark around the outside of the can so that it looks more natural and placed it in a tree in the garden. Peter also suggested that the bark might stop the tin from baking in the hot summer sun. Another suggestion was to use a plastic pot on its side. Bamboo was suggested as the tube, but I didn't think too many people would have that. I liked the fact that this was using recycled materials.

I have had a lot of fun making this. It was quite relaxing rolling up the 46 tubes to fill the tin.

Now comes the fun part of making the video. I have certainly had to learn a few new skills during our Covid-19 restrictions.

Jean Bellis

Val Henry's Garden

Here's some photos taken in my garden by my daughter Kaye.

Of course, as usual there's absolutely no use in asking me the botanical names of any plants - I'll leave that to the experts.

Bev Fox gave the lovely old lamps to Robert many years ago knowing he was a lamp collector (they were her husband Brian's who was another collector) so they are very special.

I bought the hanger (an old kitchen saucepan hanger) at Yapeen and the hook it's hanging off in the tree is from another one of my old wares purchases.

The result is my attempt at being creative.



Val Henry





Val Henry's Garden
(Photos: by Val's daughter Kaye)

APS FOOTHILLS INC.

PO Box 65
BORONIA 3155

ENQUIRIES

Email: foothills@apsvic.org.au

COMMITTEE

Leader: Janet Hodgkiss
Deputy Leader: Elizabeth Triggs
Secretary: Nicky Zanen
Treasurer: Chris Larkin
Newsletter Editor: Kerry Davis
Day Meeting Liaison: Nicky Zanen
Other Members: Pam Yarra

MEETING DETAILS

DAY Meeting

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

Date: 2nd Tuesday of the month except Nov, Dec, Jan.

Time: 10.30am

Enquiries: Nicky Zanen 040 197 5191

EVENING Meeting

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

Date: 4th Wednesday of the month, except Dec, Jan.

Time: 7.45pm

VISITORS WELCOME!