



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 2022

FEBRUARY

-

MARCH

ENQUIRIES

Email: foothills@apsvic.org.au

FOOTHILLS FACEBOOK PAGE

www.facebook.com/apsoothills

VISITORS WELCOME!



DAY MEETING

Graeme Nicholls: Experiences with Growing Australian Plants, Propagation and Grafting

Tuesday 8th February 2022

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

Time: 10.30am

[Details page 7](#)

EVENING MEETING

Chris Larkin: Strap-like Plants

Wednesday 23rd February 2022

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

Time: 7.45pm

Propagation Morning at Knox Park Primary School Saturday 26th February

Time 10.00am - 12.00 noon *(to be confirmed)*

Foothills Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/apsfoothills

Hi Everyone,

Welcome to a New Year and this rather interesting tropical summer we're having!

Hope you're all doing well and that you're healthy and happy and looking forward 2022.

I don't know about you but I feel we're maybe on the home straight with this Covid, even if it does decide to throw us a few curve balls this year.

I think we're all pretty adept at keeping ourselves safe and healthy by now, and as long we continue to respond appropriately when required, I reckon we'll be fine.

We're really looking forward to holding in-person meetings and seeing everyone again but should anything change, we'll be quick to let you know, so keep an eye out for any reminders. Like-wise, if we need to adhere to any special conditions at our meeting venues, we'll let you know.

We've got a good line-up for our meetings, so check out our calendar to see what's in store.

Don't forget that there are also two big 'plant' events happening this year, the ANPSA Biennial conference in September in Kiama, NSW, and then in October, and closer to home, Maroondah group are hosting the FJC Rogers Seminar.

Have look at the section in this newsletter 'Shows, conferences, plant sales and other items of interest 2022' for more information on these.

I'm looking forward to our first meeting, so see you all soon!

Janet Hodgkiss

November 2021 Evening Meeting

In November I gave a presentation where I did a round-up of the last five and half years at Foothills. Five and a half years sounds like a strange number to choose but that's the length of time I've been leader of Foothills.

The aim was to look back and see what we have done over the years because I often think we don't realise just how much we, as a group, get out of this group or enjoy doing together.

It was an interesting exercise putting it all together and I was able to illustrate it not only with my own photos but with photos that Nicky kindly provided as well. You'll know that Nicky often takes pictures of people, and while we may not always like having our picture taken, it was great to have these photos that show us doing stuff together.

We've had a diverse range of meeting topics and many fascinating speakers, both from outside our group as well as our own members. Our member's meetings are always interesting and often great fun (remember our insect hotel workshop), and I love that all of you are always so keen to join in, contribute and participate in these meetings.

Our working bees at the school give us an opportunity to spend a pleasant few hours in each other's company while getting a job done, and our propagation days are a chance for a chat and a catchup while learning new techniques, sharing and propagating plants. Chatting with friends while bulking up my plant stash - I can't think of a better way to spend a morning!

We've had some great outings and dinners together, visited each other's gardens, hosted a successful quarterly gathering, weathered the Covid-years very well by staying in touch through Zoom meetings, and what's not to like about end-of-year get-togethers!

Our publicity has involved having a presence at Pam Yarra's Open Garden and participating in the online Stringybark Festival in 2020. Our page on the APS Victoria website is updated regularly, our newsletter content is always top class with informative and interesting contributions from various members, and Liz continues to do an excellent job for us with our Facebook page by putting up many interesting posts.

There were too many pictures to use them all in this write-up, but here are few in case you were unable to join us for that meeting.

Janet Hodgkiss



Zoom meeting



Nicky in action!



Garden visit at Maureen Schaumann



Quarterly gathering registration



End of year get-together



Members' meeting – Myrtaceae



Propagation day



Working bee



Insect hotel workshop

Bits and Pieces

Our young kookaburras appeared around the house about Christmas time, as they do each year and continue to practise their 'laughter'. The young Bronze-wing pigeons have stayed on the block and feed on the ground as a family, happily coming in to water late in the day, not nearly as tentatively as they used to.

Wondering what all the commotion was about in the large Blueberry Ash (*Eleocarpus reticulatus*) I found several Pied Currawongs feasting on the masses of blue berries which they clearly find delicious. This cleared up the mystery of the blue bits in the various birdbaths. The tree is a handsome, shade loving, pink flowering beauty although I'm not really keen on attracting currawongs.

Now, end of January, I was delighted to hear the soft 'churring' of a young Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike and soon found the parents in attendance. The bird is a beautiful soft grey colour with a black head. I had heard it earlier in late spring. They're also known as BFCS or 'bifcus' for short. They have an interesting flick of both wings when they land, which make them easy to identify.

Relating to plants, I have watched sadly as two of my plants of *Spyridium coactifolium*, have both turned up their leaves and died. They have been such reliable, low-growing plants. I suspect too much water last year. But on a bright note, a slow-growing Flowering Gum, has been covered in bud and is now slowly turning a bright red. Earlier there was some despondency as the lower leaves were turning yellow but several waterings seems to have helped. It's not really suited to our conditions but had to have one. Rolf photographed an Imperial White butterfly flitting all over the small tree, feeding on the nectar. It's such a colourful, lovely butterfly.

On a different note, in early November last year we headed down to Aireys Inlet and Anglesea area for a few days midweek and enjoyed several heathland walks and the quiet – surprisingly few people about. A few patches of Spider Orchids were found but the

real pleasure was in finding Duck Orchids. I still had directions and notes from years ago which mentioned a walk along a cutting. The Duck Orchids flower later in the season. So just before we had to leave, we tried this walk and to our amazement we found a few. Once the eyes adjusted we found dozens. Of course, Rolf took a photo stack (32 photos to give a depth of field). Because there were so many, I felt I could trigger one. The speed of the downward movement is faster than the eye!

Finally, we spent a few days recently in Harrietville. The main reason for that area was to fly-fish the Ovens River! Balmy, sunny weather was hard to take. However, a morning spent on Mt Hotham was a very chilly change, especially with the wind chill. A couple of walks displayed some bright patches of alpine flower, in particular next to Dinner Plains village, the JB Plains hut and camping area, where we found large swathes of Billy Buttons (*Pycnosoris* sp), and many species of various daisies and gorgeous alpine plants and magnificent snow gums... the alpine landscape is just superlative.

Monika Herrmann



JB Plains near Dinner Plain

(Photo: Monika Herrmann)

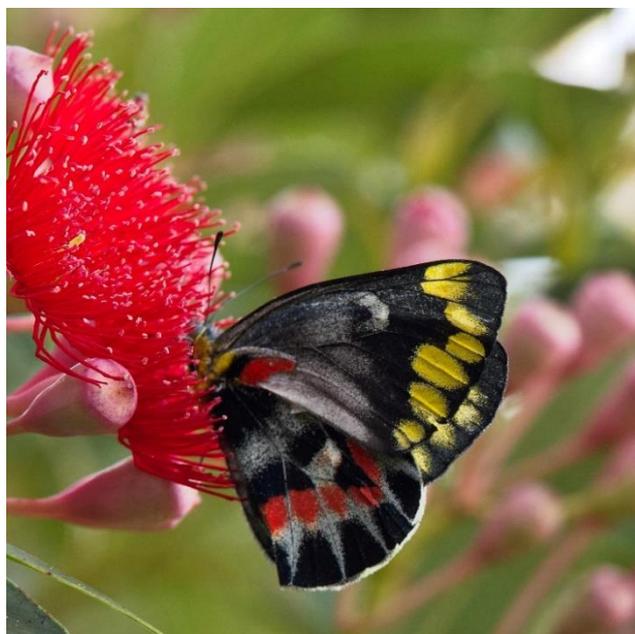


Billy Buttons (*Pycnosorus*)

(Photo: Monika Herrmann)



Duck Orchid (Photo: Rolf Herrmann)



Imperial White Butterfly (Photo: Rolf Herrmann)

NEW BOOK

Trevor Blake's new book "Lantern Bushes of Australia; Thomasias & Allied Genera" has been published! It has excellent botanical drawings of each species as well as colour photos, up to date botanical descriptions and cultivation notes. Trevor is a life member of the Australian Plants Society Victoria and is heartily congratulated for completing this epic work.

The book has been beautifully edited by Jane Canaway and published by the APS Keilor Plains group. It is a 427 page masterpiece with a double page spread on each species of Thomasia, Androcalva, Commersonia, Guichenotia, Lasiopetalum, Lysiosepalum and Seringia.

Botanical keys are included for each Genera and key distinguishing features of each species are highlighted with a distribution map included. The book price is only \$50 per copy via APS Keilor Plains (plus postage), as it has been produced on a purely not for profit basis. (Prices in nurseries and shops will be higher).

Bill and Sue, the booksellers for APS Victoria also have copies at a discount for Australian Plant Society members. Members can e-mail Bill and Sue here - apsvicbooks@gmail.com

The Botanical Classification

Family - Malvaceae
 Sub-family - Byttnerioideae
 Tribe - Lasiopetalae
 Genera - Androcalva, Commersonia, Guichenotia, Lasiopetalum, Lysiosepalum, Seringia, Thomasia.

Key to Genera

1. Petals not-like or absent
 Lasiopetalum
 Lysiosepalum
 Commersonia
 Guichenotia
 Thomasia
 Seringia 3
1. Petals always present, not scale-like
 Commersonia
 Androcalva 2
2. Stamens globose, success leaf base, outward direction of stamens face when splitting open. (All mainland states)
 Androcalva 2
2. Stamens hairy, leaf base even, gland base produced enclosing anthers, ligule always narrow. (All mainland states)
 Commersonia 2
3. Anthers open outward and split lengthwise, filaments holding anthers cold & after splitting, become papery, pink, occasionally white, otherwise split lengthwise after flowering, absence of sepals, fringes, bracteoles 4
3. Anthers open at the top during pollen set
 Seringia 4
4. The generally 5 calyx lobes are virtually free to the base 5
4. The 5 calyx lobes are partly joined 6
5. Bracteoles (by name or laminae), calyx lobes 6, petal-like, except one species (L. lysiosepalum) WA Lasiopetalum
5. Bracteoles (3-5) fine, linear, or single ones broad & colored, calyx lobes with an pronounced notch or apical notch (All states except NT) Lasiopetalum
6. Calyx lobes with 2-5 prominent ribs except 2 species, sepals present Queensland WA Guichenotia
6. Calyx lobes with 2-5 prominent ribs except 2 species, sepals present Queensland WA Guichenotia
7. Calyx lobes with prominent central or continuous colored rib, leafy, winglike sepals generally present. South of continent (QL, SA, VIC) Thomasia
7. Calyx lobes without prominent rib but generally colored at the base of lobes, sepals absent (All states except NT) Lasiopetalum



Guichenotia ledifolia

Herb
 Distribution: WA Flowering: July - Nov
 Ledifolia refers to the similarity of leaves to genus Ledum, which is now recognized as a subgenus of Rhododendrum.

Description This densely branched shrub ranges from 0.5-2 x 1-1.5m, the new growth covered in dense, white, tomentose hairs. Sepals leaf-like but shorter, 10-20 x 1-1.5mm. Leaves oblong-linear 15-40 x 1-2cm, thick, midrib hairy except near petiole, petioles very short. Bracteoles at base of calyx, 2.5-5 x 1-2mm. Petioles above 1-5cm diameter, pink to orange, 2-10 lines in cross, 3-6cm long. Petioles to 1cm long. Bracts dichotomous, 5 x 1-2mm, one petiole to 1cm long. Calyx 6-10mm long, divided to center, 3 raised ribs per lobe, both surfaces covered with dense, white, tomentose hairs. Petals present, dark red, long. Stamens about 2mm. Ovary 2-3mm, covered with a dense covering of fine, pink hairs. Style 2-3cm long, lower half hairy. Fruit 5-10mm, with 2-4 ovules, style-base covered, stippled by elongated calyx.

Cultivation This most attractive species is one of the few Guichenotia in cultivation. These appear to be different from other species, one upright with quite large flowers and sparse leaves, and the other more compact and prostrate in form with smaller leaves, another in prostrate. It is hardy in a wide range of soil types and conditions and requires well-drained soils from sandy to gravelly and clay loams. Although it prefers semi-shade or filtered sunlight, it will tolerate fairly sunny situations. It can withstand prolonged dry periods and some frost. Prune to retain bushiness. Propagate from seed or cuttings, which strike readily. Under favourable conditions it will self seed.



DISTINGUISHING FEATURES:

	Guichenotia ledifolia	Guichenotia macrocarpa
Form	erect, spreading habit	erect, more bushy
Height	10-20 x 1-2m	25-40 x 1.5-2m
Flowers	3-10 per cyme	2-4 per cyme
Style	6-10mm long	17-20mm long
Fruit	ovoid, 1-4 ovules per cell, surface hair covering	obovoid, 4-10 ovules per cell, unspotted glabrous surface hairs



Lantern Bushes of Australia; Thomasias & Allied Genera

A Field and Horticultural Guide

by Trevor L. Blake



Sample pages from "Lantern Bushes of Australia; Thomasias & Allied Genera"

Melaleuca calothamnoides and Melaleuca wilsonii

This year I have ‘renovated’ more garden areas than ever before. Four in total with each one of them presenting their own challenges and none of them small. With the latest one I have left two melaleucas which are not the best-looking plants but are beautiful in their own ways.

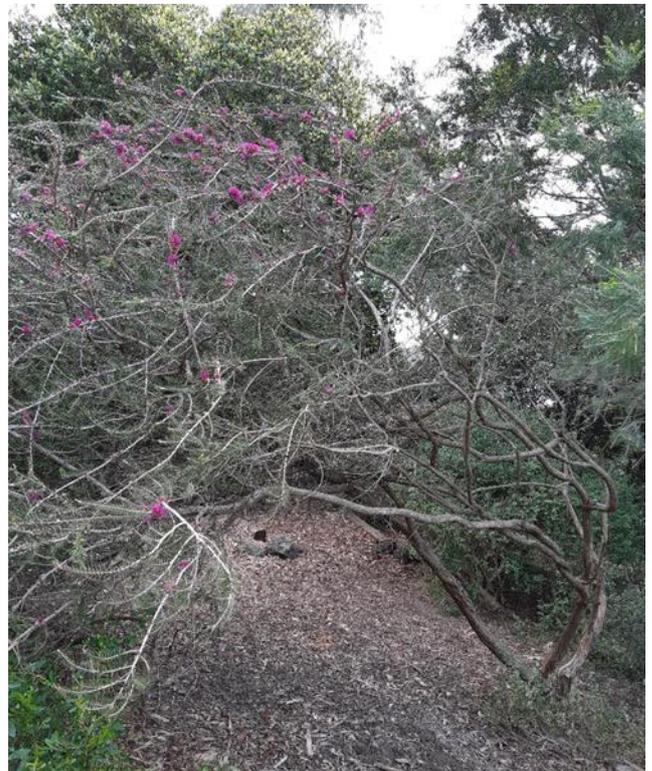
Melaleuca calothamnoides is a small tree that I’ve had for many years. Purchased so long ago I really don’t remember where I got it. From memory it was not growing all that well in the pot but I was intrigued enough by something different to go ahead and buy it anyway. As you do. It has hung on and I’m now hopeful that with the forced removal of an overly large brooding *Banksia ericifolia* it will feel liberated enough to develop and show me its true potential. I am unlikely to ever be able to bring in some of this plant to a meeting because it only flowers on old wood; flowering down the trunk and old branches as you can see in the picture.

Melaleuca calothamnoides is a WA species from the Murchison River area. Murchison River is the second longest river in WA emptying into the sea at Kalbarri. My particular plant may not be beautiful but the flowers are wonderful and intriguing as they start off green and ‘fade’ to red. The flowers are shaded soft green to soft red in a truly lovely way.



Melaleuca calothamnoides (Photo: Chris Larkin)

Melaleuca wilsonii was lucky not to suffer the fate of so many other plants in the area after the banksia was removed. Just look at its growth habit. Multi-stemmed and arching over; it is not a pretty sight.



Growth habit of *Melaleuca wilsonii*

(Photo: Chris Larkin)

While I debated what to do this plant put on a magnificent show that literally saved its life. Bright pink flowers covered the plant. If I was to anthropomorphise the plant, I would say it did so in a desperate attempt to impress me. I was suitably impressed.

Maybe it was time to think a bit laterally. How could I save this plant and include it in a good looking garden? I remembered how the Japanese prop up trees to support them in old age. Would an A-frame under the plant be the answer? Since having this light-bulb moment I have been concerned that on windy days the branches might be damaged as they rub against the A-frame, so I’ve now abandoned the idea. The unfortunate growth habit of *Melaleuca wilsonii* was hidden prior to the removal of surrounding plants, so the obvious solution is the careful selection and placement of plants to achieve a similar outcome. Some strategic pruning is also called for.

Melaleuca wilsonii is from south-east SA into north-west Victoria. I remember seeing an old plant almost lying flat along the ground at the base of Mt Arapilies. I think this was after I had already planted my specimen. The sketch in Ivan Holliday’s book ‘A field guide to melaleucas’ makes it look like a plant growing more wide than tall but there is no hint it might lie down on the job!



Melaleuca wilsonii (Photo: Chris Larkin)

When we are lucky enough to be successfully growing some unusual or difficult to source plants then it is no doubt in our interests to work with their shortcomings. There is nearly always a way.

Chris Larkin

Next day meeting

The schools are back and life is almost returning to normal. Hopefully we can have more face to face meetings this year.

Our first day meeting is on the 8th February 2022 when Graeme Nicholls will share his experiences with Growing Australian Plants, which includes handy tips and guides on propagation and grafting.

Graeme was one of the key presenters of the APS Maroondah's gardening courses and is a super communicator.

A reminder that we are still operating under Covid Rules especially for our day meeting. We are required to register QR codes and wear masks, and the kitchen is out of bounds for making a cuppa. Members are welcome to bring a thermos and their own cups, or bring a takeaway coffee with them.

If we don't reach unreasonably high temperatures on Tuesday, Maureen will be there with plants for sale. I can't wait to see you all there in person.

Nicky

Bio – Graeme Nicholls

I have always liked gardening, in a general kind of way. But it was not until we moved to our present address in Blackburn that Jan and I quickly came to conclusion that dahlias and roses and camelias were out of place in this treed environment, and that we needed to find out something about native plants that we could grow. We learned that an APS group met nearby in Blackburn, so we went along to see what it was like. As it happened, it was in September when the annual Grand Specimen Table was on the program. We were blown away by the diversity and beauty of all the plants that members were growing in their own gardens. We thought, we could do that too. We were hooked, and have been members ever since.

Fortunately we had fellow group members with knowledge who graciously answered all our dummy questions, and we began to learn things. Being of an experimental nature, I began to try propagating from cuttings. My first attempts were all total failures. So I decided to visit people who were successfully propagating and watch how they did it. I learn much better by watching others than by reading books.

Gradually my success rate improved, and now many of the plants growing in our garden are ones we have grown ourselves, often with cutting material from garden visits.

The same journey happened all over again when I tried my hand at grafting – total failures for several years. Then I watched a number of experts, and gradually it started to work for me too.

I am not trained in any formal way, but my learning, such as it is, is based on the simple principle that, if you stand out in the rain for long enough, you are bound to get wet.

Lyrebirds

Alex Maisey from Sherbrooke Lyrebird Survey Group (SLSG) invites members to the screening of "The Message of the Lyrebird" at the Belgrave Cameo on 12 February 2022 at 3 pm. This is a fundraising event for the SLSG.

About the film: Wildlife cinematographer Nick Hayward filmed the famous lyrebird sequence for Attenborough's Life of Birds series, in which a captive lyrebird produced a medley of human-origin sounds. This 77-minute film is Nick's journey to discover whether the behaviour he filmed back in the 1990's was really an accurate reflection of what wild lyrebirds are all about, while uncovering the human characters that comprise the small but vibrant world of lyrebird enthusiasts! Nick's beautiful photography is undoubtedly the most captivating footage of lyrebird behaviour I have seen. Most of the lyrebirds were filmed in Sherbrooke Forest, including at a lyrebird dawn survey. (Yes, I remember the dawn survey when they were filming – Nicky.)

To purchase a ticket,
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/the-message-of-the-lyrebird-tickets-248293190617?aff=ebdsoporgprofile>

Out and About

Our day meeting Christmas breakup was held again in Maranoa Gardens on a beautiful sunny bright day at the beginning of November. Thank you to all who attended. The gardens looked stunning, as usual, but the rainforest area was badly impacted by the high winds that raged through previously. There seem to have been a lot of these windstorms lately.



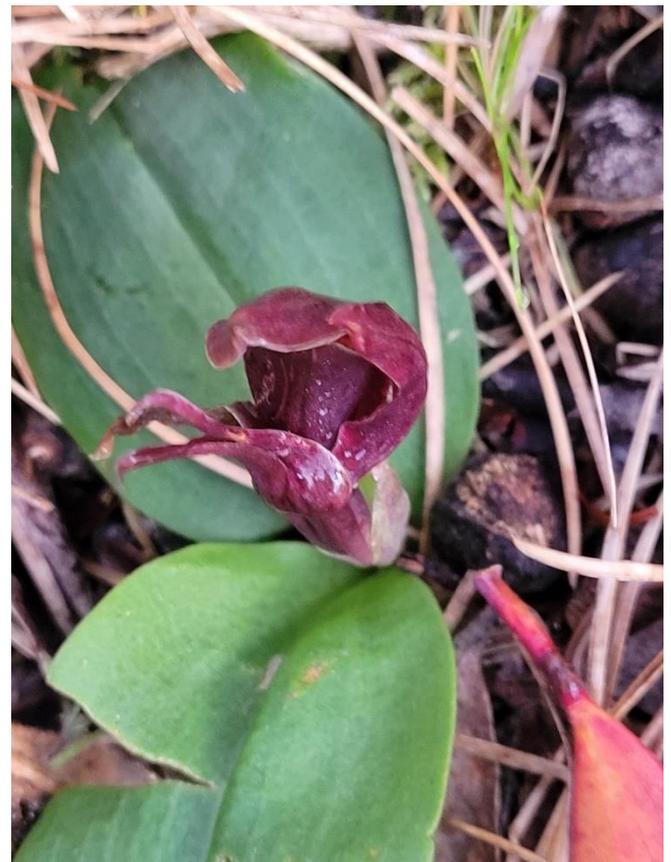
Impact of wind at Maranoa Gardens

(Photo: Nicky Zanen)

Two weeks ago I went to Mt Hotham with the Cranbourne Friends of the Royal Botanic Gardens. It was three long years since my last visit to the Australian Alps and not much has changed in that time. The panoramas as spectacular and the range of summer flowers as vast as in previous years. But I was truly rejuvenated being back in this beautiful area.

The massive benefit of being with a group of knowledgeable people is always the delightful discoveries one makes. On this occasion it was a clump of bird orchids that were within 50 metres of where we were staying (and had stayed in 2019). It amazed me that someone would have found them, but once found we could all enjoy seeing them.

On the way up to Mt Hotham I visited Barbara Setchell in Mansfield. It has been so interesting to see how her garden has progressed since she left Olinda. When Barbara first started this garden she grew so many plants that couldn't cope with the intense frosts. Now she concentrates on plants that thrive in these trying conditions and her garden is settling down beautifully.



Bird orchid (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

At one point driving through north eastern Victoria it struck me how the trees in the paddocks had put on really good growth, and that the countryside looks so good this year. At other times I've always thought

these lone trees seem to struggle so against the elements and their isolation.

The high hopes I had for the nature strip near our gate were dashed when, instead of native plants, a load of sand was dumped and grass seeds sown. When I followed up with Knox Council they pointed out that any 'garden' would need to be maintained and they don't have those resources. The grass was their cost saving measure. It does look a lot better without the agapanthus and uncontrolled couch grasses etc but I was very disappointed. Would the people abutting this property do any maintenance or mowing? I don't think so. However, when I passed by this morning I saw small fungi had appeared overnight. Where did these come from? Probably spores in the soil brought in.

Nicky



View of paddock north eastern Victoria
(Photo: Nicky Zanen)



View at Mt Hotham (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

MIFGS 2022

The latest word is that the Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show 2022 is going ahead between 30 March and 3 April 2022, and APS Victoria have been invited to take part. This is an early notice that our members will be invited to volunteer during MIFGS.

Foothills End of Year Gathering - 2021

We had a lovely end of year gathering on the first Saturday in December, with seventeen of us getting together at Bev's house. The weather was great too, although in the shade, the breeze was a bit nippy. For those of you who couldn't make it, the food was yummy as usual - cooked chicken; a couple of tasty quiches (spinach and cheese, and pumpkin, leek and feta quiche); a selection of bread and rolls; Bev's Asian salad; Pam's feta, beetroot and lentil salad; Shirley's pasta, egg, tomato and ham salad; Nicky's coleslaw; Betty's home-grown beetroot salad; Janet's cocktail stick snacks (ham cheese tomato; salami olive gherkin), and Liz's sweet potato and goats cheese phyllo cups.

We had a wide range of sweet things for dessert but interestingly, not much fruit. This was unusual, as we usually have plenty of fruit platters and pavlova-type things, but the lack of fruit didn't stop us from enjoying Leigh's fruit cake; Christmas mince pies and lemon custard pies; coconut-raspberry jam tarts, hedgehogs, and Chris' lemon cake with cream. Best of all though, was being able to catch up with each other in person again after a long year of no in-person meetings, and wandering around Bev's garden.

Janet Hodgkiss



Christmas break-up at Bev Fox's Home
(Photo: Nicky Zanen)

APS FOOTHILLS INC.

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DAY Meeting

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

Date: 2nd Tuesday of the month (Feb-Nov)

Time: 10.30am

EVENING Meeting

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

Date: 4th Wednesday of the month (Feb-Nov)

Time: 7.45pm

COMMITTEE

Leader: Janet Hodgkiss

Secretary: Nicky Zanen

Treasurer: Chris Larkin

Newsletter Editor: Kerry Davis

Other Members: Richard Maddever

APS Vic Liaison: Janet Hodgkiss

Day Meeting Liaison: Nicky Zanen

*We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the
land on which we meet. We pay our respects to
First Nations People throughout Australia, and to
Elders both past and present.*

VISITORS WELCOME!



DAY MEETING

Geoff Lay: Cradle Mountain

Tuesday 8th March 2022

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

Time: 10.30am

[Details Page 2](#)

EVENING MEETING

Alex Smart: The River Red Gum

Wednesday 23rd March 2022

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

Time: 7.45pm

Foothills Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/apsfoothills

Hi Everyone,

It's so good to be back on track and it was really lovely to see you all at our first in-person evening meeting in nearly a year!

Although our meeting was scaled back a little, in that we chose not to have supper this time round, we still managed to do most of our 'usual' stuff and catch up with people we haven't seen in quite a long time. Chris Larkin presented an interesting talk on strap-leaved and strap-like plants, and the variety and function of them in garden design. If you missed the meeting and the 'show and tell', you can read about it in this newsletter. We had our usual raffle but as it's late summer now and very dry out there, there's not much in flower so we only had a handful of plants on our specimen table. It was interesting to see though that even at this time of year, there is colour to be had in the garden. All in all, it was a great start to the year.

Geoff Lay will be talking about Cradle Mountain at the next day meeting, and Alex Smart will be talking to the evening meeting about the River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*). I have long been entranced by these majestic trees, so am looking forward to this talk.

We had a small but enthusiastic group at our propagation morning on the last Saturday in February. Apart from propagating some interesting things for ourselves, we were also propagating plants that will be used in the new sensory garden that is being developed at the school, and other plants we took cuttings of, will be used elsewhere in the school grounds.

As I mentioned at the evening meeting, we are looking for a new venue to hold those meetings. The main reason is that while the venue is pleasant enough, the chairs are not ideal. They are hard plastic and designed for child-size frames, so are quite low and not all that comfortable for adults, especially when you need to sit for any length of time. Thank you for putting up with them over the

last few years but I'm hoping that you can now help us find a new venue with more comfortable seating arrangements.

If you know of any place in the Knox and Foothills area that would be suitable, or that you think might fit the bill, please get in touch with Nicky, so that we can follow up any leads and investigate further.

We are looking for a room or space that can seat between 25-50 people, and that has chairs and some tables that we can use (we're happy to set them out ourselves and pack them away after use). We need toilet and kitchen/kitchenette facilities, and heating and cooling. If there is a screen and projector, that would be great but it's not essential, as we have our own equipment.

Even if a suitable venue is not available on our preferred evening, i.e., the fourth Wednesday of the month, please still let Nicky know, as it may be a viable option should we consider changing our meeting night in favour of venue availability.

We looking forward to your getting your input on this, so please don't hesitate to drop us and email or call Nicky or Chris. You'll find our email address and their contact numbers at the top of the information panel at the back of the newsletter.

Autumn is the ideal planting time and several plant sales are coming up, so keep a look out for details of those in the newsletter too.

See you next time.

Janet Hodgkiss

Next day meeting

8 March 2022 starting at 10.30 am

This month we are visiting Cradle Mountain through the lens and reminiscences of Geoff Lay. Geoff is an intrepid hiker with a passionate interest in natural history, focusing on plants and fungi, and a jolly good photographer too. He will share his observations with us as we visit the Apple Isle and this World Heritage area.

Nicky Zanen



Cradle Mountain (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

APS Victoria participation in MIFGS

The word is that there will be a display fully supported by Kuranga Native Nursery featuring Australian native plants at this year's Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show which is being held between 30 March and 3 April at the Royal Exhibition Building in Carlton. If any member is able to assist with manning the display to promote the APS, please contact Nicky on 0401975191 as soon as possible so that we can slot your time in. A two hour stint would be much appreciated.

Get Well Wish

We wish Richard Maddever a speedy recovery and hope to see you participating in our day meetings again soon.

Nicky Zanen

An adventure into the world of strap-leaf and strap-like plants: variety and function

Chris Larkin introduced us to the world of 'strappys' at our evening meeting in February, and started by showing us examples from the grassland adjoining her property.

This area includes not only a variety of different grass species, but also *Lepidosperma gunnii* (Little Sword Sedge), different lomandras, *Dianella revoluta* and lots of chocolate lilies (*Arthropodium sp.*).



Grassland adjoining Chris' property
(Photo: Chris Larkin)

Another sedge, *Gahnia radula*, doesn't occur in this patch of grassland up on the slope but dominates the understorey a little further down the road from where she lives, where the soil is moister.



Flowers of *Lomandra multiflorus* (L) and *Lomandra longifolia* ssp. *exilis* (R) (Photo: Chris Larkin)

Chris showed us the different types of plants with strap-like leaves that can be used as part of the plant palette in your garden, and whether your preference is for plants with foliage impact only, or for

something with more obvious flowers, there is plenty to choose from.

Although lomandras can be lethal with their cutting edges, sharp tips and spiky flowers, the plant form is very useful in garden design. The flowers are pretty, and some are delicately scented too.



Spiky flowers of *Lomandra hystrix* (L) and *Lomandra longifolia* fine leaf form (R)
(Photo: Chris Larkin)

Chris said that even if Lomandra, with around 50 species and subspecies, wasn't the largest group of strap-leaf plants, they offered the greatest variety of species and forms commonly grown. This was clearly shown by the different subspecies of *Lomandra confertifolia*, where there is not only a variety of plant form, but leaf colour and length as well.



Different forms of the subspecies of *Lomandra confertifolia*. From L-R: *Lomandra confertifolia* ssp. *confertifolia*, ssp. *pallida*, and ssp. *rubiginosa*
(Photo: Chris Larkin)

Chris uses various lomandras and other strappy plants in her garden to great effect. Some plants are used as feature plants, where their form and leaf colour creates contrast and causes the eye to pause for a while.

In other parts of the garden, plants are repeated along paths or within garden beds, the purpose being to tie garden scenes together by providing

cohesion. Repetition of the same kind of plant along paths helps bring not only cohesion but rhythm and movement to a design. Repetition encourages the eye to move or wander through the space, allowing one to engage more fully with the garden.



Lomandra being used to tie a scene together
(Photo: Chris Larkin)



Lomandras define and create movement on a path
(Photo: Chris Larkin)

Chris has a range of other strap-leafed plants in her garden and we had a look at some of those as well. They include the white flowered *Diplarrena moraea* and *Libertia paniculata*, and blue flowered plants such as *Dianella revoluta*, *Thelionema caespitosum*, *Orthrosanthus spp.*, and *Patersonia spp.* Chris showed us how strappy plants can be used in indigenous and naturalistic garden designs, and how they can be used in formal and semi-formal designs too. They provide not only form and function from an aesthetic point of view but also provide habitat and food sources for wildlife.



The pure white flowers of *Diplarrena moraea*
(Photo: Chris Larkin)



***Libertia paniculata* likes a semi-shaded position**
(Photo: Chris Larkin)



***Thelionema caespitosum* (L) has great form even when not in flower; *Orthrosanthus laxus* (R) holds its flowers within the foliage** (Photo: Chris Larkin)

With such a wide variety to choose from, and from plants that will also provide showy flowers if you want, strappy plants have much to offer, and as Chris showed, there is much more to strap-leafed plants than meets the eye, and much to love about them too.

Janet Hodgkiss

The Bad and the Beautiful

The weather certainly has been bad over this summer. We are in an La Nina year, which should mean higher rainfall than normal, but it hasn't happened where I live.

There are parts of southern Australia that have benefited, for example in S.A., but even so the rains there have been concentrated and excessive rather than spread over a longer period. I thought this year would be a no stress time with regards the garden, but I am seeing plants that, like me, are looking at the heavens for some relief.



Dead and bleached leaves on Orthrosanthus (L) and Agonis (R) (Photo: Chris Larkin)

A few plants have died, which isn't unusual, others getting too much sun exposure and not enough water have bleached foliage. There is no coming back for the bleached leaves although this does not mean the plant might not recover. The dead leaves on the orthrosanthus can be removed and the agonis is able to spring back from an extremely hard prune.

In fairness, the worst affected plants pictured have suffered from a change in their growing conditions due to a large plant, that would have normally shaded them, blowing out last winter. Plants getting a reasonable amount of shade have suffered less, probably because most of them grow naturally in the understory.

We all need shade in summer – plants and animals alike. When an assessment of my solar panels suggested one way to get a better output would be to chop down a tree or two, I said this would be crazy because then the house would be hotter. Not to mention the loss for wildlife. Shade around our homes is still one of the best things we can do to moderate temperature on hot days. And that's a scientific fact.

If you would like to see a bit more on how effective shade is, or how much hotter any surface is without shade, I suggest you take a look at 'Gardening Australia' on ABC iview if you didn't catch it live to air on Feb 25th, 2022.



Scrub wren nest - top view (L), side view (R)
(Photo: Chris Larkin)

How beautiful is the scrub wren's nest! What a smart little bird it is. For member's who came to the last evening meeting I was able to bring along one of the nests for a show and tell.

The scrub wren generally builds a nest close to the ground tucked into something like a lomandra longifolia. The first time I found one it was in a *Lomandra hystrix* right beside the back deck. The way it looked I thought it was something wedged in the foliage that I had thrown down from cleaning the gutters. I stayed my hand just in time.

The nest pictured was tucked in-between the leaves of *Banksia petiolaris*, so in effect sitting on the ground, and totally hidden and sheltered by a brachyscome growing up through the banksia. The most cunning thing about the nest design is the entry is on the side so it has a roof sheltering it from weather and the eyes of any predatory bird. Add to this the fact that the scrub wren moves so very quickly. Gone in the blink of an eye. Such good survival tactics. I love this little bird.

It is worth noting that a couple of other birds frequenting this area also build this style of nest - the Superb Blue Fairy Wren and the Red Browed Firetail Finch.

Chris Larkin

Last Day Meeting :

Graeme Nicholls – Hints on Propagation and Grafting

First Graeme gave us some basic tips for the propagation of cuttings. He stressed that there are many different techniques and each person uses whatever works well for them. He uses little thumb pots, which clearly show the emerging roots. He normally puts one cutting per thumb pot, but sometimes up to four. The single cuttings per thumb pot can easily be transferred into a forestry tube and the cutting doesn't know it has been moved! The lower leaves can be stripped off the bottom of the cutting if the bark doesn't tear, otherwise they must be pulled off upwards or cut with a blade or secateurs.

The cuttings are dipped in a hormone or honey, or whatever one has handy – often it isn't necessary. He covers the pot with a ziplock bag that has been sprayed with water to maintain humidity, and places the pot in a fully sunny aspect under cover of 50% shade cloth. The cuttings are looking for warmth and light all day, but require filtered light not to burn. Phil Hempel used to have a hothouse which could reach a temperature up to 50°C. His plants would go off like a rocket. It's important not to wet the leaves of silver-leaved species as they can easily rot. Dunk their pot briefly in water as needed.



(Photo: Nicky Zanen)

Grafting:

Grafting is helpful when trying to grow plants which don't like our clay soils or humid climate. Grafting onto a local vigorous rootstock can improve things. Graeme showed a compact, bushy form of *Eremophila nivea* grafted on a *Myoporum montanum*, and a *Crocea saligna* growing happily on a *Correa glabra* rootstock. Many rutaceae species will graft successfully on the common correa. Use rooted understock if you have one, but cutting grafts are frequently successful, and they don't

require a supply of rooted plants. Graeme gave us a demonstration of putting a cutting graft together. The top part (scion) and the bottom part must be similar in diameter to match the cambium layers. The rootstock piece is prepared as for any cutting. The scion must have healthy new buds or growing shoots.

Graeme uses the top wedge technique. With a razor blade or surgical scalpel (Graeme feels he gets better control with the scalpel) he cut a slice into the rooting cutting, and a matching wedge for the top piece. He uses Parafilm or Nescofilm to bind the two firmly together (a small piece is all that is required because it stretches a lot). Graeme holds the cut piece of Parafilm in his lips so he doesn't lose it – it easily disappears amongst the cuttings. Try not to touch the exposed recently cut areas. The graft should be waterproof. He covers the pot with a moistened ziplock bag, using wooden skewers as little stakes to keep the plastic off the foliage.



Graeme demonstrating (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

Looking after the grafts is the really important part. They need to be checked about every week to remove any unwanted new growth from the rootstock. If something is growing, cut it back with a sharp blade. After about a month or so you will know if they are going to survive or die. Another successful and easy combination is *Grevillea flexuosa* on a rooted *Grevillea robusta*. Cut the *G robusta* to a reasonable size, trim a couple of the

upper leaves, then add the scion. Squeeze slightly as you wrap the parafilm. Skewers are again used to protect the scion under the plastic cover.

Grafts take time to strengthen. If the top gets too heavy, tip prune to reduce the overweight, or support it with a small stake. If the parafilm opens up a bit, rewind some more parafilm. A reminder to keep the grafted plants in a hot, sunny but sheltered spot.

Graeme was so good at explaining his practice of grafting to the point one could almost feel confident in having a go themselves. Thank you so much Graeme.

Nicky Zanen

From the Secretary

This year APS Foothills, or the Society for Growing Australian Plants, renamed the Australian Plants Society Foothills, celebrates its half century. Fifty incredible years. This gives us a chance to dive into the archives and come up with some sort of celebration. I will be approaching members for input towards a snapshot of APS Foothills history in the next couple of months.

But for now, I wanted to start with Stringybark Festivals.

On the dot of 9.00 am on Saturday during each Stringybark Festival, Maureen Schaumann and Judy Barker would appear, ready to pick over the offerings and purchase some treasures. This is how I got to meet both Maureen and Judy. They were key members of the Daisy Study Group and in later years would participate themselves by putting up a 'Daisy Display' as part of ours.

At one APS Geelong Plant Sale we chatted, and the need for a day group in Melbourne was broached, and no sooner was this said than this was done, with Maureen and Judy, Faye Candy and Joan Rand became as the key movers of this group.

It was with much sadness that we were advised that Judy Barker died on 4 February 2022. She was such a keen participant of our group. Our condolences are sent to her family and to our members who were very close to Judy.

From Maureen Schaumann

Judy was Maureen's dearest friend and felt it difficult to write about her. However, she has passed on a few of her memories.

"I first met Judy at Waverley APS in the seventies. We joined within a month of each other. After a few years she became a very popular Leader. I didn't really get to know her until I started the Daisy Study Group. She was my first member. From then on we became firm friends and worked together on daisies for 27 years. She became one of the Leaders of the Study Group in 1996 for five years after Esma Salkin retired.

Judy and I spent many happy years together giving talks to District Groups and others on Daisies. Judy was an excellent speaker and very much in demand. I remained behind the scenes putting up a small display of daisies, selling seed and plants for the Group. Our displays of daisies at Flower Shows were also well known and this was one activity we always loved doing.



Judy Barker (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

During those 27 years we wrote three books with Judy as Editor. Australian Daisies, Australian Brachyscomes, and Australian Daisies for Gardens and Floral Art. When the group disbanded we wrote 'Collect and Grow that Seed' which, once again, Judy edited.

Judy had a home at Fairhaven where she spent a lot of time and became involved in Angair. The flora of that area was very dear to her heart. She spent many happy hours in the company of Mary White who she greatly admired. She worked tirelessly for years for the annual Wildflower Show at Angair. As well as putting on a beautiful daisy display, which was admired by many, she propagated plants of the area for sale and donated all the proceeds to Angair. Is it any wonder she was made a Life Member? Judy loved Hibbertias, Tetrathecas and Correas and these were always included in her basket every time we visited a nursery. She was a great propagator

herself and was well known for her generosity in giving most of her plants away. I will always remember Judy for her kindness and generosity. She was loved by everyone who met her.”

Thank you Maureen.

Nicky Zanen

Out and About

It has been so good to catch up with our members face to face, and to be able to visit our favourite nurseries again. A quick visit to Kurunga last week saw me clutching onto my wallet because I did not want to buy any plants at the moment – the ground is far too dry for planting and I already have many that need attention. That is, till I went to the tube section and discovered a blue flowering plant I hadn't seen before.

Dwarf skull cap – *Scutellaria humilis*, with tiny blue flowers. These flowers intrigued me. They are so tiny, 0.8 cm long according to the Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants (Elliott & Jones). It is found in Queensland, NSW, Victoria, Tasmania and SA and flowers between September to April. It was described as a dwarf perennial suckering herb with white to mauve to pale purplish red flowers with white markings, moderately profuse and conspicuous. A vigorous suckering species, mostly in moist sheltered sites. Flora of Melbourne lists it found in Frankston, Warrandyte State Park and Plenty Gorge, so it isn't exactly a local plant.

A second *Scutellaria* is mentioned, *S mollis*, soft skullcap. This is found in rainforest and wet sclerophyll forests and is useful for hanging baskets. The flowers are a little bigger than the *S humilis*, up to 1 cm long. (I was just wondering how much bigger 1 cm is to 0.8 cm.)

Scutellaria are of the Lamiaceae (mint family).

I have a penchant for blue flowers and will also mention a *Brunoniella pumilio* which I have growing in a very tricky spot that is fully shaded, next to my driveway. Bev Fox gave me this plant saying it was tough, and I agree. It hasn't been watered much and is performing very well.



Brunoniella pumilio (Photo: Nicky Zanen)

It was so good to hear Chris's talk on strappy plants. She made many references to using this form in landscaping and I particularly liked her comments about repetition, especially along pathways and also to consider repetition across a path so that it feels as if you're passing 'through'.

Another point I had overlooked was using grasses near tree trunks. I have done that with one tree, but haven't tried the others. Mind you, Chris is a fan of *Poa labillardieri* which I banished from my back garden as it was self seeding too much. Instead I transplanted some to the challenging conditions amongst my row of corymbias. Here they are thickening up but I feel I can manage them there.

I also loved Chris's comment on "badly behaved strappy cordylines". Just as she said, they may behave badly but can create an important focal point.

Nicky Zanen

Art Exhibition

Alex Smart sent us the following regarding an Interesting Exhibition at Maroondah Federation Estate Gallery, Greenwood Ave, Ringwood.



He said, "I attended the opening of an Exhibition by artist Hsin Lin. Several paintings feature Australian Plants. I was excited to find a person of non-European origin who has a marvellous appreciation of Australian plants. My immediate reaction was that your groups should be advised of this free exhibition which runs 9am to 5pm weekdays until 8th April 2022. Some photos may stir your interest. I am the last person able to describe Hsin's style but it is clear she has expressed her own uninhibited work. Some of the paintings are a little modern, some may have some slight bokeh effect but whatever the proper description, I can vouch the final result with is marvellous."

Check www.hsinlinart.com



Hsin Lin artist

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DAY Meeting

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

Date: 2nd Tuesday of the month (Feb-Nov)

Time: 10.30am

EVENING Meeting

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

Date: 4th Wednesday of the month (Feb-Nov)

Time: 7.45pm

COMMITTEE

Leader: Janet Hodgkiss

Secretary: Nicky Zanen

Treasurer: Chris Larkin

Newsletter Editor: Kerry Davis

Other Members: Richard Maddever

APS Vic Liaison: Janet Hodgkiss

Day Meeting Liaison: Nicky Zanen

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we meet. We pay our respects to First Nations People throughout Australia, and to Elders both past and present.

VISITORS WELCOME!