



Correa Mail

Newsletter No 407 - November, 2024

OCTOBER MEETING - Dr. Jen O'Dwyer

Our speaker was Dr. Jen O'Dwyer, a senior veterinary surgeon at Werribee Open Range Zoo. Jen has had a very varied career caring for animals, as a veterinarian for Animals Asia both in Vietnam and China. She has a Masters in Wildlife Conservation and Medicine and a Masters in International Animal Welfare, Ethics and Law.

She works now at the Animal Hospital for Werribee Zoos collection and the associated Koala Ward with injured and orphaned wildlife. It was about this that she focussed her talk to our group.



The Koala Ward came about after the horrendous 2019/2020 Bushfires. In collaboration with RSPCA, a new state of the art wildlife hospital was created at Werribee Zoo. It is currently treating around 100 sick and injured wildlife patients monthly. It has state of the art

treatment rooms and equipment and separate recovery rooms for mammals, birds and reptiles, all of which have their own special requirements for recovery.

There is a number of large outdoor recovery enclosures, where animals that are able to be released are given some extra time and exposure to the outside world. These enclosures are partly roofed and partly open and are separated by screens of native plants ... callistamons, melaleucas and grevilleas ... that not only separate each enclosure, but provide shelter and food for nectar feeding animals like flying foxes, sugar gliders, honeyeaters and lorikeets.



The shelters are planted around by taller trees, mostly Eucalypts, which proved shade and protection from the wind, but also food for the koalas in care. Werribee Zoo also has a plantation of around 10,000 trees (including 21 species of Eucalypts) which are harvested to provide food for all the animals at Werribee and Melbourne zoos.

The care provided by Jen and her co-workers is vital in providing the best chance of rehabilitation for a wide variety of injured, ill and orphaned animals. Kangaroo joeys orphaned by cars, possums attacked by the family cat, lorikeets that fly into windows, young fruit bats that are suffering heat-stroke, seagulls that have swallowed fish-hooks, all of these, and many more are treated by the staff at the Koala Ward. Some require care by way of food, water and time to recover others require surgical intervention, like this turtle whose shell was fractured by an unfortunate encounter with a car.



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But the survival rate is very good and we heard some heart-warming stories of recovery and release.

Jen talked about ways that we can help keep our wildlife safe. Fruit bats and birds can become entangled in the netting that we put over our fruit trees to protect them. Many stores sell netting that is not suitable, and not animal safe. Make sure your netting is wildlife friendly and Victorian Law compliant with mesh size not greater than 5mm x 5mm.



Seals and water birds suffer greatly from carelessly discarded fishing tackle. Zoos Victoria has a conservation program called 'Seal the Loop' which provides special bins and wharves and jetties for safe disposal of old tackle.

Most Australian mammals are active at sunset and sunrise, and many take advantage of the extra grazing provided by the run-off from country roads. Slow down when driving at these times and help reduce road trauma to our native animals.



Another Zoos Victoria program 'Safe Cat – Safe Wildlife' urges us all to keep our cats indoors or confined in an outdoor run to protect not only the cats, but our wildlife from these very efficient hunters.

And, as Jen pointed out, we are already doing a good thing for our native wildlife ... we are growing native plants in our gardens. In doing so, we are creating habitat, food and shelter for a large variety of native birds, animals, insects and reptiles.

Jen did not want any recompense for talking with us, so the club made a \$150 donation to the Koala Ward through Zoos Victoria LEAP Bespoke Bequests scheme. We also presented her with a print of Penny's drawing

of one of Jen's favourite patients at Werribee, Ganyeka, the Western Lowland Gorilla.



Ganyeka, by Penny Foster

NOVEMBER MEETING – November 19th - BATS

PLEASE NOTE: There won't be a meeting at The Ballroom in November.

Due to illness our scheduled November speaker is unavailable. So Grant Baverstock will lead us on a bat watching evening at Eastern Gardens. Meet at 7.00pm at the car-park opposite the East Geelong Golf Club (see map).



Bring your binoculars , cameras, a chair, a cuppa or glass of your favourite tippie and lots of insect repellent! There are around 3000 Grey-headed Flying Foxes there at the moment. Grant will tell us all about

them, then we'll watch the flyout. Afterwards, Grant will use his detector to see what microbats are about. It should be great fun.



Flying Foxes at Eastern Gardens

2024/25 MEETINGS and OUTINGS

Lyhn Barfield has done some sterling work in organising speakers for next year and our calendar is filling fast ... Well done Lyhn and thank you!

- Nov 3** – ANOS Orchid Show – Christ Church Hall
- Nov 19** - Grant Baverstock – Bat spotting
- Dec 8th** - Christmas Break-up BBQ
- Jan** - In recess
- Jan** – Campout at Mt. Hotham
- Feb 18** - Sophie Small –Bellarine Indigenous Plants
- Mar 18** - Kelly Clitheroe – Light Pollution Effects
- Apr 5** - Plant Sale
- Apr 15** - John Lenagan – Insects and Ecosystems
- May 20** – Plant Based Trivia and Pizza
- Jun 17** - Ian Evans – Brachychitons
- Aug 19** – AGM and Photo Competition

**Australasian Native Orchid
Society
(Geelong Group) Inc**
Reg No A00140625

ANNUAL ORCHID

Orchid displays **SHOW 2024** Sales
(EFTPOS available)



Sunday Nov 3rd
10am to 4pm
Christ Church Hall
Cnr Moorabool and
McKillop St
Geelong 3220
Entry \$5.00
(Children under 14 free)



Includes Morning and Afternoon Tea

CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP BBQ BASH

We've moved the Christmas break-up BBQ to Sunday 8th December. It will be held at St Helen's Park, with a car-park at the end of Bay Street, North Geelong. There are BBQs, toilets and shelter if the weather should be less than ideal.

Please bring your own meat, drinks, plates, cutlery and chair. We would love if everyone could bring a salad or dessert to share and join in the festive spirit.

11.00 am for a chat before lunch. See you there.



PLANT TABLE - by Ade Foster and Joy Sutton

Joy Sutton: The yellow form of *Calothamnus quadrifidus* I planted in one of my gravelly/sandy raised garden beds in September 2018 and it has proceeded to go absolutely mad. So much so that I have to severely prune it after every flowering or else it threatens to take over the whole garden.



Even with the pruning it has a spread of at least 2.5 m and reaches skyward by about 1.5 m. In spring its glorious feathery yellow flowers are a magnet to the red wattle birds and New Holland honeyeaters.

The genus is endemic to south west WA but this species is certainly flourishing here.

Joy also brought along *Prostanthera rotundifolia* and *P. melissifolia*, *Hakea elliptica* with attractive orange new growth and a *Melaleuca* with tiny purple flowers, perhaps *M. squamea*.

Tracey Hind: Tracey's garden is brand new and she's loath to remove flowers from tiny plants. However she managed to find a beautiful deep red *Xerochrysum bracteatum* (with lots of requests for seed) and a lovely *Chorizima cordatum*.



Chorizima cordatum

Di Royce: Di brought *Ajuga australis* which she grows easily from cuttings and *Melaleuca fulgens* with deep red flowers. She also had a rather stunning *Eremophila maculata*, with large, deep purple, heavily spotted flowers and another unidentified *Eremophila* with tiny purple flowers.



Melaleuca dismifolia – Wikipedia, Geoff Derrin

Carmel Addlem: Carmel had a green and a yellow *Callistamon*/*Melaleuca* as well as this month's Plant of the Month. Read on

Bruce was 'volunteered' to conduct the plant table discussion and chose *Melaleuca decussata* brought along by Carmel Addlem. Carmel writes ...

***Melaleuca decussata*- Totem Poles.**



I believe this is the name of the plant that I brought to the plant table, but have been unable to find the tag. I'm happy to be corrected if I have it wrong.



My shrub is about 1.5 m high x 1.5 m wide. It has beautiful mauve/purple bottlebrush like flower spikes to 2 cm. It is covered in flowers and buds and is very showy over the spring and summer. Its distribution is coastal areas of South Australia and Victoria, from Eyre Peninsular to Gippsland. It can be readily propagated from seed or cutting.



I purchased this as a tube stock at one of plant sales a few years ago.

AMORPHOPHALLUS KONJAC – by Roger Wileman

When Sheila showed photos of Roger's latest garden success, I was totally amazed. I organized a visit to see these amazing flowers before they wilted. *Amorphophallus konjac* is not a native, but this is such a wonderful achievement, it's worth a read anyway. Ed.

This is a fascinating genus of the Arum (*Araceae*) family consisting of about 170 species, occurring in tropical regions of West Africa to Polynesia, Sumatra, China and Vietnam with one species occurring in the tropical North of Australia. Although some species occur in rainforest areas, many grow on the edges of forest, in disturbed vegetation, ranging from sea level to about 3000 m elevation.



All are terrestrial herbaceous perennials, with underground tubers. The largest member is *Amorphophallus titanum* - The Titan Arum – and has the largest unbranched inflorescence in the world. Some flowers reach 3.0 m in height.

The leaf and flowers appear at different times. The leaves are large and frond like and appear each year, reach maturity and die. The decaying leaves act as a food supply for the underground tuber. This cycle may occur for many years until the tuber is big enough to produce the enormous flower.

The spadix – the central 'column' - carries the male pollen. The female flowers are found deeper down in the same plant. When the female flowers are open, they emit a foul odour similar to rotting meat, hence the common name of corpse flower. This odour attracts flies and beetles, which crawl over the spadix, taking pollen to the small female flowers below. After pollination the huge inflorescence will collapse.

The species that we have in the garden (I am fairly sure) is *Amorphophallus konjac* from South Eastern China and Vietnam. I have had the tubers for many years and this is the first flowering.



Sheila says: It stinks like a dead body and Roger could not smell it even with his nose almost in the flower. Yuck!

MENTHA AUSTRALIS – RIVER MINT by Ade Foster

At the last meeting, Lyhn Barfield brought along a few pots of *Mentha australis* - River Mint, as a handout to members, and it was gratefully received.

Mentha is a genus of about thirty species found in Europe, Asia and North America with seven species in Australia. Common culinary herbs like mint, thyme, oregano and sage belong in the family.

Mentha australis has a widespread and interesting distribution in Australia. It is found across South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales, west of the Great Divide. It extends into central and west Queensland and south east Northern Territory. It is usually found along watercourses.



It is a straggly perennial herb and may grow to about 75 cm high. It has tiny mauve flowers in summer and autumn. It does well in a pot, and if leaves are harvested for cooking, it remains quite compact. In the garden it can become invasive in damp and shady situations.

It has a delicate spearmint flavour, and was used by indigenous folk as a bush food, medicinal herb and an insect repellent.

JANUARY 2025 HIGH-COUNTRY TRIP

by Bruce McGinness

Your committee is planning a trip to Mt Hotham to coincide with the peak of flowering in the alps. The final cost per person will depend on the number of members attending as we intend to book-out the entire lodge. Two sets of dates are being considered:

- Arriving: Friday 10th January
 - Departing: Monday 13th January
- Or
- Arriving: Friday 17th January
 - Departing: Monday 20th January



The Kalyna Ski Lodge we stayed at last year has a communal a style commercial kitchen and sixteen bedrooms with various bed configurations each with a bathroom and toilet. When we booked out the lodge last year there were enough rooms for couples and individuals to have a room to themselves. The lodge has a large communal area with expansive views over the alps. Participants can be as active or sedentary as they wish. There are many easy walks near Dinner Plains or more challenging walks towards Mount Cope.

I will need to book this lodge soon and pay a deposit so please get in early and help me plan. I can promise you beautiful scenery and lots of wildflowers. We have visited the alps several times over the past few years so we can guide you on many easy walks to showcase the flora and scenery and identify most of the flowering plants. I suspect there will be some knowledgeable members attending who can help with any wildlife identification as well. We will not be organising bus transport, and I would recommend members arrange carpooling amongst themselves. If you have any questions, please contact me.



CONTROVERSY CORNER

by Bruce McGinness

Botanic Gardens or Botanical Gardens? Our driver on the Bendigo bus trip was outraged when he passed a sign pointing to Bendigo Botanical Gardens. "Totally wrong!" he said ... but is it?

Consulting the Macquarie Dictionary, the entry Botanic Garden was the primary entry with: also, Botanical Gardens. In our driver's defence there are 15 Australian gardens listed with the adjective Botanical and 129 are listed with the adjective Botanic.

A web search indicates botanic, and botanical are both acceptable, but botanical is more common in 21st-century English.

Editorial Comment: *In defense of the un-named driver, who shall remain un-named, (but his initials are Ade Foster) may I point out that according to the Macquarie Dictionary editor, the terms 'would of', 'should of' and 'youse' are acceptable Australian English due to common usage. A bit like 'Botanical' Garden. Well ...not in my life-time, they ain't!*

NEWSLETTER EDITOR – Position Coming Vacant

The December newsletter will be my last. I'm in my fifteenth year as editor of The Correa Mail, and I'm extremely proud of its evolution.

Penny and I have a very busy year next year with family and travel, and we won't be around much. So, now is the time for me to hand over the reins to a new editor. Penny will also resign as Treasurer.

Please let me or any member of the committee know if you'd like to take on these roles. I'm happy to assist a new editor with the transition, or you might like to take the Correa Mail in an entirely new direction. I look forward to reading it next year. 😊