



# Correa Mail

Newsletter No 365 - February, 2021

## FEBRUARY MEETING

## Members' Night

The dreaded Covid interrupted our plans yet again, so the February gathering became a Zoom meeting. It was, as scheduled, a "Show'n'Tell" night and we had a great collection of photos sent in by members for everyone's enjoyment.

There were great photos of holiday encounters, garden plants, very unusual flowers, birds and insects, spiders and much more.

Thanks to Matt and Nicole Leach, Joy Sutton, Roger Wileman, Tony Cavanagh, Carmel Addlem, Ade Foster, Frank Scheelings and Bruce McGinness for their contributions.

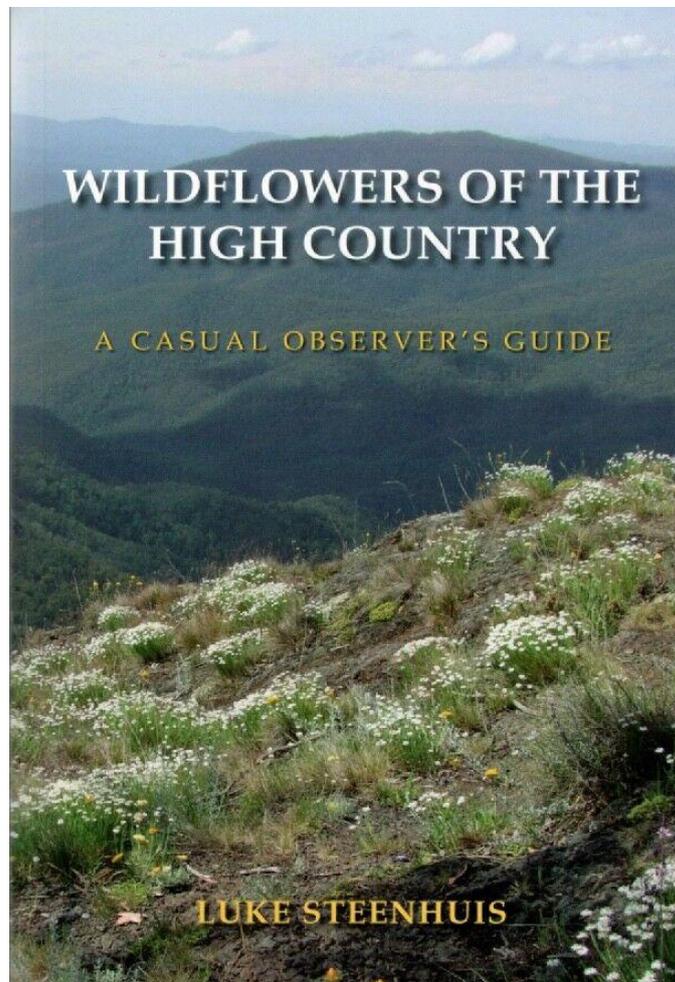


One of Bruce's amazing images

A video of the presentation can be found here .....

<http://apsgeelong.org/webinars.html>

Bruce's presentation on a few of the plants he found flowering around Falls Creek in February prompted a question from Roger about the book he used for identification. The book is "Wildflowers Of The High Country" by Luke Steenhuis



This is a wonderful book and a must have for anyone travelling to the high country.

## MARCH MEETING

16<sup>th</sup> March

Our March meeting, whether in real the flesh or via zoom will be a talk about the gardens and plant use at Werribee Zoo. There is extensive use of natives as well as exotics at the zoo and the gardens are a delight. We will follow the talk with an excursion to the zoo in spring.

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## 2021 PLANT SALE

April 17<sup>th</sup>

As things stand, our 2021 Plant Sale will go ahead on Saturday April 17<sup>th</sup>. Plans are underway and advertising has begun. As usual, we will be looking for lots of support on the day to help make things run smoothly. We will update you with any changes and will be asking for a commitment from you soon.



**AUSTRALIAN  
PLANT SALE**

SAT 17<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021, 8:30<sup>AM</sup> - 4:00<sup>PM</sup>

A large variety of native plants provided by specialist native nurseries for sale.

- Open garden
- Book sales
- BBQ & refreshments
- Kids activities

Adults \$2 each, Children free!

Wirawilla, 40 Lovely Banks Rd, Lovely Banks

AUSTRALIAN  
PLANTS SOCIETY  
Geelong

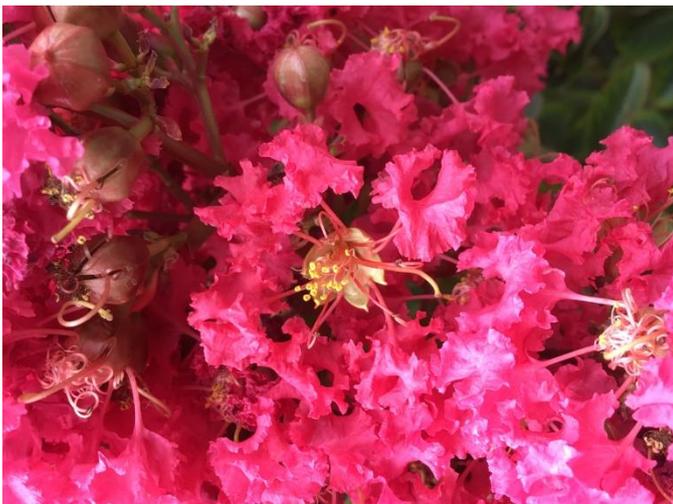
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## CREPE MYRTLE

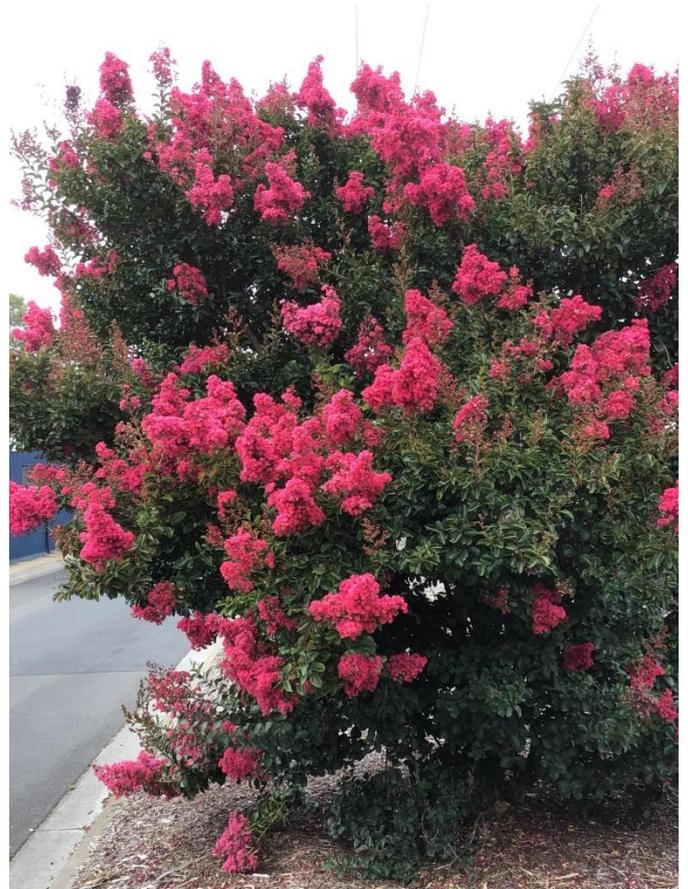
by Roger Wileman

*Lagerstroemia sp.* or Crepe Myrtle, belong to the family Lythraceae, with some fifty three species. They can be evergreen or deciduous small to large trees from Southern and Eastern Asia - Thailand, China, Malaysia - and across India.



The timber from some species has been used in bridge buildings, furniture and rail way sleepers. Some species have beautifully coloured trunks and many have brilliant coloured foliage in autumn. They are very hardy trees and will grow in a wide variety of soil types and

climate conditions, although they prefer an open sunny position.



Their main claim to fame is the beautiful display of crepe like flowers held high on the plants in summer. Colours range from white, through pink, to red and even purple. There are many in flower around Geelong at the moment, and they do give a wonderful display.

There are many hybrids producing a great range of colours. An older group of hybrids that originated in Australia many decades ago were mainly a cross between *L. indica* from China and Japan and *L. speciosa* from India ( known as 'Pride of India'.) These are often referred to as Indian Crepe Myrtle. Unfortunately, some of these crosses were prone to sooty mould and eventually grow to a size that is too big for the average garden, so the demand for these beautiful trees became less.

Over the past decades many hybrids have been developed and released by the U.S. National Arboretum Maryland. They have been selected for flower size, colour, hardiness, mildew resistance and bark colour. Some of these new hybrids have been named in reference to the native American people.

To my surprise there is a species of *Lagerstroemia* native to Queensland, *Lagerstroemia archeriana*. It is a tree to seven meters in height with weeping branches and rich pink flowers.



**Crepe Myrtle along Scenic Road, Highton**

As with other *Lagerstroemia* sp., the timber is very dense and durable and was used for fencing posts. There is also a sub-species that is known from the Kimberley region on Western Australia. This sub-species has a larger flower which is white. *Lagerstroemia archeriana* is now being grown successfully in gardens from Coffs Harbour to Cairns.

**WIDER GEELONG FLORA LECTURE**                      **9<sup>TH</sup> March**  
**Significant Plants of the Brisbane Ranges**

**By Chris Lindorf**

Hosted by the Geelong Field Naturalists Club, this is a lecture series focussing on Australian flora. Speakers cover a diverse range of interests. This month is about significant flora of the Brisbane Ranges. The lecture is an online event, starting at 7.30 pm, and is free. You will need to have a Facebook profile to watch this lecture. From the GFNC Facebook page .....

*Chris Lindorf will talk about the "Significant Plants of the Brisbane Ranges", such as the Steiglitz Grevillea which is endemic to the ranges.*



***Grevillea stieglitziana***

*Chris grew up in Anakie where he developed an early interest in nature, including birds and native orchids, that later expanded to include all vascular plants.*

*He began his career as a fire support officer and then became a consultant specialising in flora assessments and fire ecology. Chris is currently the Corangamite Regional Manager of Trust for Nature.*

*To obtain a link to the Zoom event, email the club at [info@gfnc.org.au](mailto:info@gfnc.org.au) by Sunday 7th March and we'll send it to you before Monday.*

**THE DIVERSE FLORA OF THE MITCHELL RIVER**

**By Bruce McGinness**

In late February I went for a kayak down the Mitchell River in East Gippsland from Angusvale which drops off from the Bairnsdale--Dargo Road to Glenaladale. This section goes through the Mitchell River National Park and provides a diverse range of plant communities with remarkable scenery. The Mitchell River is the last major river in Victoria to remain undammed. An attempt to dam the river was made in 1893 with the dam wall damaged beyond repair in a flood the following year.



**The wrecked dam wall**

As Leon Costermans states in his wonderful pocket guide of Victorian trees: "the area east of Mitchell River can be considered a southern extension of near coastal NSW and is the meeting ground for plant associations further west of Victoria. East Gippsland is less than 8% of Victoria's area, but nearly half of the states 3000 plus native vascular plant species occur there".

As we drove down to the Mitchell river valley to Angusvale the dry shallow soil in the surrounding bush supported such species as *Eucalyptus mannifera* (Brittle Gum) and *Acacia terminalis* (Sunshine Wattle) which was in full bloom. Once in the river isolated pockets of closed-canopy non-eucalypt vegetation are

encountered, Leon Costermans describes these as warm temperate rainforest or jungle pockets. In these pockets' species such as *Pittosporum undulatum*, *Syzygium smithii*, and *Tristaneopsis laurina* thrive. In these communities there are lianas such as *Marsdenia rostrata* vigorously growing up through the canopy into the light above.



***Marsdenia rostrata***

A more unwelcome plant was the incredibly spiny *Solanum prinophyllum* (Forest Nightshade) which is a native solanum which thrived under the canopy of the lilly-pillies.

The river cuts through many deep escarpments with *Brachychiton populneus* (Kurrajong) thriving in shallow dry soil; the contrast in plant communities is remarkable as you round each bend in the river.

I counted myself lucky to find a *Spiranthes australis* orchid (Austral ladies' tresses) growing by the side of the river, I haven't seen one of these in the wild before even though they are relatively common. According to the native orchid society website they are easy to cultivate.

You don't need a kayak to see a cross section of the plant communities of the Mitchell river; they can be seen by walking down to the Den of Nargun near Iguana Creek.



***Brachychiton populneus* growing on escarpments**

The walk down to the Den is a relatively steep one-kilometre walk but is well worth the effort to see a fabulous cross-section of escarpment vegetation with the path descending into a jungle pocket dominated by large *Tristaneopsis laurina*. This is highly recommended as a destination for the next holiday with plenty of bush camping in the vicinity or the nearby Echo Bend Park caravan park at Iguana Creek with a few more comforts.



***Tristaneopsis laurina* growing by the river**

#### **TEMPORARY EDITOR STILL NEEDED**

Penny and I will be away for the April and May meetings, touring outback NSW and QLD, and sailing in the Whitsundays. We will be gone for about seven or eight weeks all up.

I would love someone to take over the job of producing the newsletter for those two months. Please let us know if you would like to help out. It would be a shame for there to be no newsletter for those two months.