



Australian Plants Society

Grampians Group Newsletter

# Gari-Word

May 2022

## NEXT MEETING

7:30 Tuesday 17th May  
Stawell Neighbourhood House  
**'Brachychitons'**  
by Ian Evans

## Next Meeting

Our next meeting promises to be a treat for lovers of unusual plants. Neil's article below introduces us to the fascinating *Brachychiton* genus, which Ian Evans will be talking about. Ian will also be bringing some rare grafted specimens for sale.

You are invited to join Ian at the Gift Hotel at 6:00pm for dinner before the meeting.

**Could everyone please bring flowers to the next meeting towards bunches to be given to Margo Sietsma and Aileen Banfield, following the deaths of Margo's granddaughter and Tom Banfield.**

## Brachychitons and Bottle Trees at Panrock Ridge by Neil Marriott

Wendy and I have always loved our famous Bottle Trees and have planted a number of them in our gardens in recent years.

We are also very fond of our other wonderful Brachychitons and have *Brachychiton bidwillii* which we bring inside every Christmas to use as a Christmas tree! The reason for this is that, like other Brachychitons, they drop their leaves prior to flowering, leaving the branches covered in masses of large showy flowers for around four to six weeks over summer.



Rock Kurrajong *Brachychiton bidwillii*  
Photo Neil Marriott



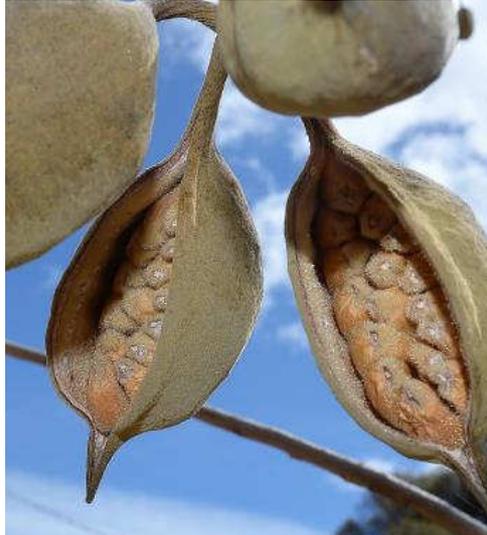
*Brachychiton* 'Noels Surprise'  
(*B bidwillii* x *discolor*)

Following the Fred Rodgers Seminar in Bendigo in 2015 on 'Brachychitons and Allied Genera', Wendy and I were given a range of grafted Brachychitons to trial by Humphris Nursery. We were also given a number of unusual species and hybrids by Ian Evans, our speaker for the May meeting. He was then President of Bendigo APS Group, who had propagated a large number for the seminar. We planted these out the following Spring in an avenue along the track to our Grevillea Gardens. We call this 'Brachychiton Boulevard'. Despite the following summer being extremely hot and dry, all the plants thrived. Several of these are depicted below.

I am really looking forward to hearing more about this wonderful group of our Australian plants when Ian comes up to speak to us on the topic at our next meeting.



Brachychiton 'Robin Hood'  
*B. bidwillii* x *B. acerifolius*



Attractive fruits of *Brachychiton bidwillii*



'Kurrajong' *Brachychiton populneus*

ALL IMAGES BY NEIL MARRIOT

### A secret surprise in my garden. by Glenda

Tucked away amidst the *Acacia cognata* growing in our native version of a Japanese garden, are two hanging baskets given to me by Wendy Bedggood 3 years ago.

I had completely forgotten about them until 2 weeks ago when deciding to remove some dead foliage from the *Acacia cognata*. A delightful surprise was to see a basket bursting with green hoods (not sure what type) growing tall and proud despite not being watered or really 'loved' – all throughout our dry Summer.

Wendy had brought me these following the APS Goodeniaceae weekend which we had worked together on.

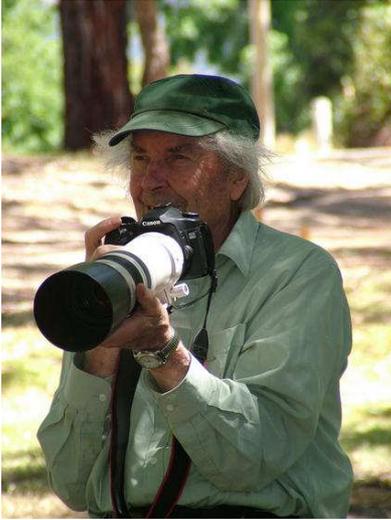
It was an absolute thrill to discover one of my favourite orchids actually growing in our garden. Thank you Wendy!



## Vale Tom Banfield

Tom Banfield, life member of APS and long time member of the Grampians Group left this life on Tuesday 3rd May 2022.

Tom had 93 years of a wonderful life, full of adventures, love and nature. For 51 of these years Tom was of member of APS, many of which were with the Pomonal Group.



Some of you will remember Tom, regularly attending meetings and active with the annual Pomonal Flower Show. He would turn up to help set up, with a boot full of flowers picked from the grounds of Grampians Paradise Camping and Caravan Parkland - the family property. He would set about making a large flower arrangement which would usually be positioned in the entry way of the old Pomonal Hall. The left over flowers often being used on the display tables and smaller flower arrangements.

I particularly remember having lots of fun with dad (Tom) setting up various displays on and in front of the stage of the old hall. Some were quite elaborate themed displays, with small water ponds, painted murals and other large feature displays.

In 2012 Tom was part of a team that set up the display (pictured) including a large 2.4 meter diameter pond featuring wetlands plants from Grampians Paradise and a small flowing creek. This display was aimed at promoting wetland ponds within Native Australian Plant Gardens.



Those of you who are long time members will also remember December meetings often held at Grampians Paradise hosted by Tom Banfield and family. These meetings were followed by a picnic dinner or BBQ and often a walk around Redman Bluff Wetlands. Tom loved the outdoors, native plants and the native animals.

Aidan Banfield

### Additional Information:

Sunday 22nd May 2022 at 2pm  
at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, High Street, Ararat there will be a special memorial service for Tom Banfield  
Afternoon tea will be served after the service.

Farm Gathering at Grampians Paradise 28th and 29th May 2022

Those wishing to camp over the weekend are welcome (or who live locally) and are invited to gather under a marquee by a campfire for a picnic type bring your own meal on Saturday evening around 5.30pm to share memories of Tom.  
Saturday 2.30pm some of us will head off on a gum trees and wetlands walk around the farm.

Sunday 29th May we celebrate '90plus'

A Commemorative service for Tom

Followed by

Aileen Banfields official 90th Birthday Celebrations

Service time will be at 11.30am Sunday 29th

This will be followed by a bring your own Picnic Lunch and the cutting of the Birthday Cake for Aileen. There will be time for people to mingle and chat.

Tea, coffee and hot water will be available.

Please bring your own chair, food and any camping needs, that would be very helpful.

If you would like to camp, please contact Aidan, Nessa or Douglas on the campground number 0353566309

We welcome everyone and because we are out bush, please bring warm clothing, and your memories to share.

Email [camp@grampiansparadise.com.au](mailto:camp@grampiansparadise.com.au)

## April Presentation by Clive and Catherine Plants in Wild (High) Places

Those who attended the April meeting were rewarded with a fine talk by Clive and Catherine, both keen hikers and adventurers. They took us to the Himalayas and the alpine regions of Japan and discussed the way plants cope with changes in altitude. At the higher altitudes, life must withstand extreme UV, freezing air temperatures and at times high surface temperatures, high winds, drought stress, photoinhibition, burial under snow, soils low in nutrients and low levels of O<sub>2</sub> and CO<sub>2</sub>. Some plant adaptations to such stresses include seasonal avoidance by deciduousness, minimisation of surface area, or thick waxy cuticles and hairs and thick epidermal cells, to reduce heat and water loss and protection against UV and low, ground-hugging or growing in sheltered locations.

Trees on average worldwide require a growing season of 100 days above 5°C, which dictates the tree-line, be it ~500m in Scotland, 1,700-2,000m in Australia or 4,200m in Nepal.

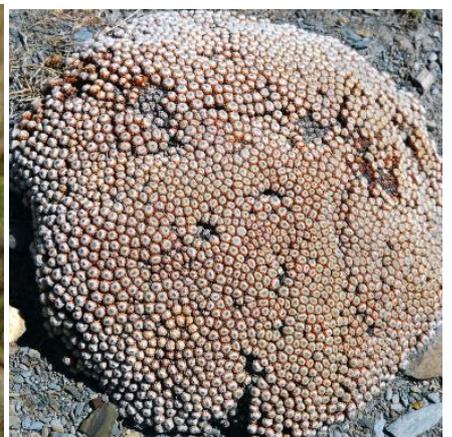
Examples of vegetation changes due to altitude in SE Nepal:



Some examples of plants that have adapted to high altitude



Wild Rhubarb in Nepal



Thanks to Clive for his permission to reproduce some of his excellent photos  
John

## Halls Gap Botanic Garden Report by Margo Sietsma

It's probably time to give you an update on the Grampians Gariwerd Botanic Garden in Halls Gap. Much has happened since I wrote a report in September.

Quite a few things to report:

Early last year we received two grants from DELWP. The first was for a toilet for volunteers, a new shed so we could have an office, and a complete renewal of our watering system. All of these have now been completed and I submitted the report on how we spent this grant and it was approved. Much relief.

The new watering system came just in time, or actually a bit late, as we were caught unawares by the very dry weather over summer. We have some replanting to do, and we are most grateful to APS for offering us some new seedlings.



*New toilet arrives*

We also received funding for signage about indigenous use of plants. Getting approval from the local groups took some time (They are under huge pressure with the new Park management plan), but it came through in February. We did receive permission from Professor Ian Clarke to use his map of the tribes' areas prior to colonisation.

We have put posters in the shelter near the bridge and the gate to Venus Baths for this, and have moved the description of the garden by Ken Woodcock to the other side. The Peaks Trail (GPT) walkers come past it and we hope they learn about the way plants were used prior to colonisation.

Signs re indigenous use beside important plants are yet to be made. We have chosen ten of the most used plants, and have approval of the wording. Now we are waiting on a quote. The signs will be on aluminium, very similar to the ones by the Historical Society on the path to Venus Baths.



*Watering system in use*

We have had a couple of weddings, and hope to get more. We ask for a donation and put signs around asking people to respect their privacy.

There is a tour company taking students in Melbourne from Asian countries to regional Victoria. We had a first visit just before the Covid lockdown and they have restarted. I'm not sure what they did on the Saturday, but on Sunday 10th April we had a group of 25 in the morning and another 25 in the afternoon. (They did rockclimbing in the other time slot). They did a huge amount of work. They helped repair the fence, cleared a lot of bracken near the fence, cleared a new path in the top corner. They cleaned the noticeboard, moved Ken Woodcock's posters to the far side and replaced them with the new posters about how the Indigenous folk here used plants before settlement.

They seemed to really enjoy themselves, learning to use gardening tools, admiring our trees and even going inside the hollow one. When working with me on the posters we disturbed a large huntsman spider which had them most impressed.

I am soon heading to Canberra and then to a Botanic Gardens conference at Eurobadalla on the NSW coast. There I will have a short session talking about our garden, plus lots of listening to experts. If there is anything useful from the conference I'll report on it when I get back.

Margo

Margo



*New shed*

## Why Would Anyone Grow Banksias? by Ross McGregor

How often do we hear our members say, "I don't grow Banksias, they just die"?

Now, as a Past Master of 'banksiacide', I have to agree. I have probably killed more banksias than most. I have had *Banksia hookeriana* produce flower buds and then promptly die and *brownii* and *seminuda* that grow into significant trees and then turn up their toes. Banksias can look a little poor one day and as dead as a door nail the next morning. Why then do the more foolhardy of us persist with this self-flagellation?

Before you rush off to pull out the few plants that have managed to survive our long dry summer stop a moment and consider the wonder of the genus.



First of course is the amazing diversity of the flowers. From my completely unbiased position they are best of all the Australian plants. From the glorious tiny flowers of *violacea*, *pulchella* and *candolleana* to the giants of *media*, *grandis* and *praemorsa*. The colours range through the whole palette, burgundy, yellow, mauve and even blue. Some such as *cuneata* and *ilicifolia*, the matchstick banksias, don't even look like Banksias but are never the less glorious.



The new growth alone makes so many of the Banksias worth a place in the garden. There is not a time in the year when one or other Banksia is not putting on a display.



But wait there is more. What about the seed pods? My favourite is *menziesii* but there are so many others that are great value. In case you are not convinced, what about the marvellous foliage. *Brownii* and *dryandroides* are well worth a place in any collection for the foliage alone.



The diversity is staggering. Massive trees and creeping ground covers. Some banksias have erect

flowers and others pendulous flowers and there is even one, *repens*, where the flowers appear out of the ground as if by magic.

Although the beautiful Western Australian species can be tricky there are plenty of wonderful Eastern species. They are glorious plants and certainly encourage birds, insects and small mammals. Give them a go, keep the nurseries profitable and enjoy the exhilaration when you see a rare species mature and flower.

**Credit:** The superb bouquet above was photographed by Kevin and Kathy Collins at the Banksia Farm, Mt Barker, and is published with permission

## What we have seen flowering in April in the Victoria Range Grampians Gariwerd National Park by Catherine and Clive



As we drove along the Glenelg River Road we crossed the Glenelg River and spotted many bushes of *Hakea nodosa* flowering profusely in the swampy area.

Plants were growing to 2m high and 2m wide and scattered over the swamp with small yellow clusters of flowers along the stems. We did not see any fruits.



We continued to the Fortress walking track and started our walk along the sandy flats where we found two types of *Banksia* growing side by side - *Banksia ornata* (desert banksia) and *Banksia marginata* (silver banksia). *Banksia ornata* was flowering with large 10cm X 5cm flower spikes. These bushes were much larger and a darker green than the smaller *Banksia marginata* bushes growing here.



Interestingly when we reached the top of the range we found a third *Banksia* species growing - *Banksia saxicola* (rock banksia). I had seen this before on the Mt Difficult range and the Mount William range, but do not remember seeing it in the Victoria range. There were many fallen burnt old plants with a profusion of young seedlings growing up reaching about 1m. I guess that this is regeneration from the 2011 fires.



The first orchid we have seen this year was visible on the woodland floor. The diminutive Parsonsband orchid - *Eriochilus cucullatus*. Stem was about 10cm high with one pale pink flower.

Continuing up the track we saw *Correa reflexa var angustifolia* and *Epacris impressa*



## A Banksia Success Story

Ross's article above really resonated with me as my rate of Banksia failure has lately been tragic. But here is one of my (accidental) successes: *Banksia brownii*. It is the only *Banksia* to have soft,



feathery foliage. It grows naturally in the Stirling Range in WA and is rated *critically endangered*. All populations there are threatened by *Phytophthora* dieback, to which it is highly susceptible. A recovery plan has been developed.

The fact it is still alive at my place would seem to indicate that *Phytophthora* is not present, which is good news.

**Pictures** Left, inflorescence, showing soft, feathery foliage.

Right, whole tree, about 3 metres tall. Phil

## Members' Pictures

Kevin



Kevin sent this study of 'Nature red in tooth and claw'.

When I first saw it on my phone I wondered why he had sent a picture of a rose bush. When I got it onto a bigger screen and cropped it, it became obvious. A great shot, Kevin!

The newsletter will only continue if it has material to include. If you value the newsletter and enjoy reading it please consider making a contribution.

Contributions in any form, physical or digital are welcome. Items submitted on paper, for example photos, will be scanned and returned. subject matter need not be limited to native plants, but can also include anything you think members may find interesting.

Email: [mailto:grampiansnewsletter@apsvic.org.au](mailto:mailto:grampiansnewsletter@apsvic.org.au) or by phone: 0438 566 250 or by post to:

Phil Williams P.O. Pomonal 3381

Thanks to everyone for their contributions to this issue.

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/APS-Grampians-Group-960723023989990/>

### APSVic Grampians Committee 2021-2022

#### Office Bearers

President: John King

Vice President: Neil Marriott

Secretary: Lisa Ashdowne

Treasurer: Catherine Pye

#### Ordinary Members

Ross Simpson

Fiona Lucas

Wendy Marriott

Neil Macumber

Margot Galletly

Ann



2 bream I caught at Narrawong recently. ( I out fished someone!!)



*Crimson Rosella at my place. recently.*



*Corellas near Franks have found a new home. Branch fell off.*