

Australian Plants Society

Grampians Group Newsletter

Gari-Word

November 2022

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 15th November
Monica & Phil Coleman
Walks in the Grampians

Next Meeting

Monica and Phil will introduce us to some walks which will be of particular interest to plant lovers. They will also have copies of their excellent book for sale, and people may bring their own copy for signing.

Supper: surnames A to K

President's Report 2022

Since October 2021, after two years of cancelled meetings during the COVID pandemic, we have at last had a more-or-less normal year. We looked at the distribution of members and decided more meetings should be held at the Stawell Neighbourhood House, given that that was more convenient for half our members. It also has the advantage over Pomonal Hall of having better acoustics and having the seating and projector permanently set up. On occasion, Neil and Wendy also provided the opportunity for guest speaker presentations to spill over into a garden walk the following morning; and so Paul Kennedy's November Hakea talk was followed by an excellent hakea stroll at Panrock Ridge.

Our December meeting was a red-letter one for our group. The extensive planning for the APS Vic quarterly gathering and our 40th birthday celebrations back in September all seemed to be for nought, after an agonising COVID cancellation, but Glenda & Greg Lewin generously opened up their place for our Xmas and 40th anniversary celebrations and what a great party we had. Long-term members each received a commemorative vase by James McMurtrie, and most members took advantage of birthday plants. There was birthday cake, bubbles, Phil Williams' – excellent slideshow look back at our group over the years, speeches, good food, lots of flowers and camaraderie. It reflected everything that we prize about our group and why we belong.

A generous offer from Kevin & Sandy in February saw about 40 members munching a catered pre-meeting dinner on the deck outside the Pomonal Hall, prior to Royce & Jeanne Raleigh providing an excellent presentation on turning a bare paddock in Wartook into one of the finest native gardens in the state. A lingering memory for me is Royce telling of trucking-in over 1,100 tonnes of scoria for the garden beds! Graham & Maree Goods at the Stawell Neighbourhood House in March impressed one and all at the quality of their photos of the flora and fauna of the Little Desert. It was at this meeting that I proposed to them that they lead us on an October trip to the western block of that national park, not suspecting that La Niña would so affect our plans. We hope to hold the trip next year instead.

Catherine & Clive are popular presenters, and took us into wild places in March and again in September ... only for the adventurous, but perfect for the armchair explorer. Ian Evans from Bendigo on Brachychitons in April was very popular and came with slides, samples to pass around and plants to purchase. The following morning in their beautiful garden, Neil & Wendy hosted a Brachychiton walk with Ian.

In May we heard of the death of long-time member Tom Banfield, who lived a long and full life. We erected our marquee for a memorial service for Tom, and Fiona presented the Banfields with beautiful bunches of flowers from all of us. Winter is the season for afternoon meetings, members having voted in favour of not heading out to meetings on chilly, early sunset nights.

In June we combined a hall-and-Jane's-garden working bee with a barbecue and a spotlight on local birds by our resident expert birder, Neil Macumber. Another Saturday afternoon working bee in July and Neil Marriott's fantastic overview of Gariwerd bioregions and flora, focusing on endemic plants (i.e. those that only occur in the Grampians).

In August we were back to 3rd Tuesday evening meetings. Bill Aitchison travelled up from Melbourne to share his extensive knowledge on small wattles, followed the next morning by a meander along Wendy's wattle walk at Panrock Ridge.

Then of course there was our long-awaited flower show after two cancelled years. Winter and the lead up to the show had been cool and wet, temperatures barely reaching the high teens and sunny windless days few and fleeting. Well, we had fine conditions for our Thursday and Friday preparation days, then two glorious fine, sunny, still days for the show. The weather was even considerate enough to hold off on a brief shower until Saturday evening. In the week following the show the heavens opened with totals of over 90mm in Pomonal! Much has been said about the show, the wonderful organisation by Jocelyn, everyone pitching in, the collaboration with Halls Gap, over 1,000 visitors, six new members, the way it has become a real community event, with the market, WAMA & Jallukar Landcare stalls and Men's Shed sausage sizzle running over both days. It was very satisfying to be a member of our extended community.

AGM Treasurer's Report

Australian Plants Society Grampians Group

FINANCIAL YEAR	Start Date	01-Jul-21
FINANCIAL YEAR	End Date	30-Jun-22
ANZ CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Balance at 1 July 2021	6642.54
PETTY CASH	Balance at 1 July 2021	82.00
TERM DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	Balance at 1 July 2021	9747.75
TOTAL 1/07/2021		16472.29
ANZ CHEQUE ACCOUNT	Balance at 30 Jun 2022	90.07
PETTY CASH	Balance at 30 Jun 2022	133.15
TERM DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	Closed 11th January 2022	9787.06
BENDIGO BANK ACCOUNT	Balance at 30 Jun 2022	15845.13
TOTAL 30/06/2022		16068.35

Motion: All accounts listed here for payment be approved, those accounts already paid be ratified and that the Treasurers Report as presented be accepted.

Moved: Catherine Carlyle

Seconded: John King

DATE 18/10/2022

Our membership stands at 70 individuals this year, up from 67 the previous year and 58 the year before that. Alex Graham, now in a unit in Ararat, elected not to renew after 28 years with the group.

Our committee was well-balanced and constructive and we can look back on a satisfying year.

Finance

We decided to move our bank account from ANZ to Bendigo due to poor service, low interest rates and the involvement of the ANZ in the fossil fuel industry. We employed credit-card processing ability by registering with 'Square' and a Square card-reader was used at the show. We elected to leave membership fees unchanged at least to June 2023.

Community

We were pleased to lend our projector, laptop, sound system and marquee to community events. We admire Anthea's initiatives on making Jane's Garden outside the Pomonal Store something to be proud of and gave committee support by encouraging attendance at working bees and providing the post-work cuppa. We have written to authorities on the maintenance of the Stawell Hospital garden, and on roadside weed species, chiefly

Gazanias. We offered plant advice & support for proposed plans to upgrade the playground behind the hall and continue to request improvement of the acoustics in the hall.

Guest Speakers

We agreed a guest speaker meal allowance be \$35 per head, extended to those hosting any guests, and have done away with paying for speaker accommodation, instead encouraging billeting by members. The speaker travel allowance has also been increased.

I have come to know most of you much better, have seen our membership rise, especially given the 'lost' COVID years and I have seen countless examples of how a community group can be something to be proud of. Best wishes to you all

John King

October 2022

WINTER-FLOWERING HAKEAS by Neil Marriott

Hakeas are often considered the poor cousins of our beautiful grevilleas. Both are members of the Proteaceae family, and both have a wealth of species suitable for the home gardener. Hakeas are not as popular as grevilleas which is possibly due to the ability of grevilleas to hybridise freely, and these highly colourful, flamboyant garden plants can be mass produced by cuttings to create thousands of identical showy and vigorous plants for the nursery trade.

Hakeas on the other hand don't often hybridise, and when they do, are often not as easy to propagate by cuttings as grevilleas. In general, hakeas are propagated by seed, readily available for most species from established plants. Seedlings take several seasons, before they begin flowering but, seedlings are generally hardier, soon becoming drought tolerant and able to cope with cold and wet winters. And the most wonderful thing about hakeas, is the most amazing and variable foliage.

I have found that the vast majority of hakeas are extremely reliable plants for the home garden, be they small groundcovers or tall screening shrubs or even small trees. And what a wonderful group of plants for gardeners: tough, reliable and (once established) full of the most beautiful and highly variable flowers. All species are wonderful for attracting our native honey-eating birds, bees and butterflies to our gardens. Sadly many of our nurseries don't realise their value, and hakeas can be rather hard to come by, even at specialist native nurseries. Let's look at some of the best ones for brightening up your garden in the depths of winter.



Hakea myrtooides Myrtle Hakea

***Hakea myrtooides* Myrtle Hakea**

This is one of the most beautiful of all the small hakeas, prostrate to around 0.3m high and up to 1m wide. This makes it perfect for rockeries or other well drained sunny to dappled shade sites in the garden. It comes from the Darling Range area out of Perth in Western Australia and is occasionally available at native nurseries.

***Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty'**

This most beautiful spreading shrub arose as a natural hybrid in the Darling Range, east of Perth, Western Australia. Originally described as *Hakea crassifolia*, it was soon recognised to be a hybrid between *Hakea myrtooides* and *Hakea petiolaris*. Fortunately cuttings had been sent to Burrendong Arboretum near Wellington in New South Wales, when the original plant was killed in a bushfire. The plants at Burrendong grew well and I was fortunate to be sent cuttings for my nursery at Deep Lead. From these early cuttings, I registered the hybrid with the Australian Cultivar Registration Authority (ACRA) and it soon became widely available in the nursery trade. It is an extremely hardy and showy shrub that starts off semi prostrate, but gradually becomes larger, eventually getting over 1.5m tall and several metres wide. However it responds well to heavy pruning to maintain a



Hakea 'Burrendong Beauty'

smaller size if wanted. One of the best for attracting lots of native birds to the garden.



Hakea clavata Cactus Hakea

***Hakea clavata* Cactus Hakea**

This is an amazing little shrub, normally growing only 0.5-1m tall and wide. Its thick fleshy leaves have a sharp tip. It occupies exposed granite outcrops on the south coast of Western Australia, its roots often jammed into narrow cracks in the rocks. Here its thick cactus-like leaves allow it to survive the hot dry summers as they are full of life-giving water! In the garden it is hardy and small, a feature shrub with clusters of pretty pink flowers throughout the winter months. It likes a well-drained sunny site, and is extremely hardy to hot dry and cold wet conditions.

***Hakea cucullata* Scallop Hakea**

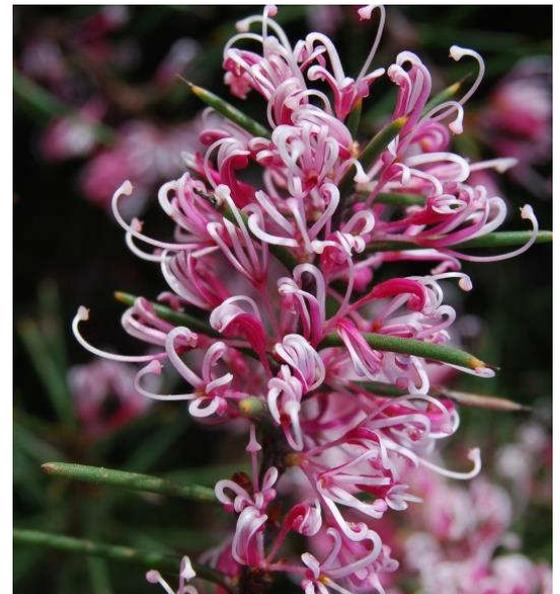
A hakea with the most amazing scallop-shaped leaves, and bright pink flowers massed at the base of each leaf through the winter months. Coming from southern Western Australia, Scallop Hakea grows as a large shrub to around 4m tall and 2m wide. It has a bold, erect habit and judicious pruning can ensure this feature is maintained in the garden. Plants are hardy in cold wet conditions, but not drought, and prefer a well-drained sunny to semi-shaded site in the garden.



Hakea cucullata Scallop Hakea

***Hakea decurrens* Bushy Needlewood**

One of Victoria's most common hakeas is native to much of the state. It is a large shrub growing to around 3m tall and 1-2m wide with long prickly needle leaves. This feature makes the plant unsuitable for the average garden, however it is one of the best hakeas for sheltering our little native birds as the prickly foliage is ideal for them to retreat into or nest in. The flowers are massed and range from white to showy pink. Regardless of the colour, they are beautifully perfumed, filling the garden with sweet spicy fragrance throughout the winter months.



Hakea decurrens Bushy Needlewood

***Hakea laurina* Pincushion Hakea**

Pincushion Hakea is probably one of our most well-known and available hakeas, with its masses of beautiful ball flowers throughout the winter months. There are several forms in nurseries, and all are wonderful hardy and showy background plants for the garden. The weeping form is quite lovely. *H. laurina* can grow up to 5m tall and 2-3m wide and the dwarf form growing only to around 1m.



Hakea laurina Pincushion Hakea



Hakea francisiana Grass-leaved Hakea

***Hakea francisiana* Grass-leaved Hakea**

Occasionally available in native and general nurseries, this large bushy shrub to small tree grows to 5m tall and 3m wide. It has long flat grey-green leaves, and masses of spectacular rich pink to pink-red bottlebrush flowers display for many months through the cold of winter. It grows naturally in drier areas of Western Australia, and as a result it needs a very well drained sunny site in the garden. Grafted plants for colder and wetter climates are often available, and once established it makes a valuable large long-lived feature or screen plant.



Hakea invaginata Sheath Hakea

***Hakea invaginata* Sheath Hakea**

This is one of the most delightful of all hakeas, when all its branches are massed with spectacular pink flowers. It is a dense erect broom-like shrub to around 2m tall and wide, and requires a well-drained sunny to dappled shade site in the garden. Once established it is extremely drought and frost tolerant, making it a wonderful addition for inland gardens, and a showy screen.

***Hakea orthorrhyncha* ssp *filiboba* Bird-beak Hakea**

This is one of the most dramatic hakeas when in flower due to its feature of flowering on old leafless branches. This results in a mass of spectacular red flowers crowded within the middle of the bush. Due to the open habit of Bird-beak Hakea the effect is quite beautiful, the whole bush glowing with fiery red flowers. It grows to 3m tall and wide so needs room in the garden, but is hardy to both drought and frost so long as it is well drained.





Hakea victoria Royal Hakea

***Hakea victoria* Royal Hakea**

One of the world's few naturally-variegated plants, Royal Hakea named in honour of Queen Victoria, comes from the southern Kwongan of Western Australia; these biodiverse heathlands are part of the Fitzgerald River National Park and Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve. There, in the wild, it is a small, erect shrub to around 1.8m tall, but under cultivation it can grow to 2m tall and wide. Wild plants soon develop rich yellow, to orange, then rich red and grey-green variegated foliage - a field of these is truly spectacular! However, under cultivation plants are a lot slower to colour up, and often never attain the colours of plants in the wild. To counter this, I have found that plant colour can be improved considerably by applications of trace elements to the foliage and soil. Avoiding any fertilisers also helps them colour up. It is not drought tolerant, needing a deep soak during dry summer months. The photo above left is of a three year old plant in our garden in the Black Range.

***Hakea scoparia* Broom Hakea**

Like *Hakea invaginata*, *Hakea scoparia* is a dense, erect broom-like shrub to 2m tall and wide. It has massed cream flowers that turn a dusky pink colour with age, creating a beautiful show when in full flower throughout the winter months. Broom Hakea is very hardy to both drought and frosts given a well-drained sunny to dappled-shade site in the garden.



Hakea scoparia Broom Hakea

Summary

I hope you enjoyed this small selection of the many beautiful and unusual winter-flowering hakeas that are available. The contrasting foliage and flower shapes and sizes make for perfect talking points for your garden, and they are valuable for attracting, and sheltering our precious native birds, bees and butterflies. Next newsletter I will write about the wonderful summer-flowering hakeas that can put on a bold and beautiful show for you through the heat of summer.

We are growing as many species of *Hakea* as we can get hold of here in the Black Range – currently we have over 160 of the 170+ species. We try and grow three of each species so we increase the chance of seed set, while reducing the chances of hybridisation.

And watch out for the wonderful new book on hakeas by the leader of the Australian Plants Society Hakea Study Group,

Paul Kennedy, from Colac. It's due out next year. I am helping Paul by photographing all the species as they come into flower here. Last week Barry Teague and I went down and spent two days in Paul's garden photographing many of his extensive collection, and came home with seed of at least half a dozen more species.

WAMA Open Garden and Art Festival

WAMA Open Garden and Art Festival was held on Sunday October 9th at Grannes gardens. With the blessing of a dry day, and Glenda and Greg Lewin's native garden in tip-top shape, guests were treated to something very special.

The work of renowned Australian nature painter, John Wolseley, was a great highlight of the day - his expression of Australian landscape and the life within it so beautifully displayed at the gallery.

The other treat was walking through the gardens with Neil Marriott as he shared that seemingly endless stream of plant knowledge and wondering how he can remember all those names.

As Neil discussed the *Eucalyptus orbifolia* Round-leaved mallee and was explaining the presence of mistletoe larvae

on a mistletoe within the tree, the butterfly itself emerged. Flying towards us all, it swung back to rest on the next mallee, as if to demonstrate its beauty to us all. Excited, we clamoured to take pictures.

This is one I got. What a happy surprise indeed.

Lisa Ashdowne



This Month's Stars in the Garden



It would be difficult to find better examples of how incredibly diverse the Lily family is.

On the left is the lovely Tinsel Lily, *Calectasia intermedia* from the Grampians and on the right is the astounding Gymea Lily, *Doryanthes excelsa* from the Sydney sandstone region. One is barely 30cm tall and the other is over 3 metres!

My Recent Visits to England and Singapore

A few months ago I decided it was time to catch up with family living overseas. So, first my brother living for many years in Bali, next my sister, again many years in Germany, then my son and family in England including my five year old grandson and my two year old granddaughter who I had only met on computer screen. I won't bore you with stories or photos from them, but there are two places I visited that you may find interesting.

TRING

The first was a museum not that far from my son's home, the Natural History Museum at Tring. Absolutely fascinating. It's a collection of insects and stuffed animals from the 19th and early 20th century collected by Walter Rothschild to show people exotic creatures they would never see in any other way. It was the largest privately owned zoological museum in the world. He wanted his museum galleries to display the wonderful biodiversity. After he died the museum was donated to the public. His focus was on vertebrates (backboned animals) and Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths). With the vertebrates he employed some experts to stuff animals from his property and from zoos which had died.



He was particularly interested in animals that would inspire his visitors. So what animals did I see? A polar bear, gorillas, zebras, and many more. Stuffed animals you can get right up close to, which is really interesting. Australian animals included a Tasmanian thylacene, various possums. So if you visit England do try to get to Tring. It's not that far north of London, not far from Milton Keynes for one reason or another. He did not pay anyone to kill them, just ones that had died naturally or accidentally.

SINGAPORE

On my way back to Australia my two daughters met me in Singapore and we visited the Singapore Botanic Garden. Singapore actually has two Botanic Gardens, a conventional one which we didn't get to (pity), and a fairly new elaborate one. It has a large tall hothouse building which features plants from around the world, including quite a few Australian ones. Very worth visiting.

Margo Sietsma

Margo's pictures from Singapore Botanic Garden



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> 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/>

This is the new committee, elected at our AGM:

APSVic Grampians Committee Until October 2023

Office Bearers

President: John King
Vice President: Neil Marriott
Secretary: Margot Galletly
Treasurer: Wendy Marriott

Ordinary Members

Ross Simpson
Fiona Lucas
Neil Macumber
Jocelyn King