

# Australian Plants Society

Grampians Group Newsletter

# Gari-Word

June 2023

## NEXT MEETING

2:30pm Saturday June 17th

Pomonal Hall

Neil Macumber:

“Travels Through the Great Victoria Desert”

Afternoon Tea: L to Z

Next meeting marks the first of our ‘Winter timetable’ afternoon meetings. As an antidote to the cold, grey weather Neil Macumber will be taking us to the sunny Great Victoria Desert in WA. This month also marks the 10th anniversary of my first edition as newsletter editor for the group. Thank you to all the people who have sent in contributions over the years. There would be no newsletter without you.

Phil Williams

## Ten Years of Newsletters

Looking back through some of the old newsletters I realised what a lot has happened in the last ten years. In 2013 nearly everyone received a printed copy through the mail. I remember what a tedious job it was printing, collating and mailing them. Now all but 3 members get the newsletter via the internet. We still had meetings in the old hall until 2015. Our first meeting in the new hall was August 2016. We’ve had years of disruption and cancellations due to Covid. Through all that we’ve managed to keep the group together and kept up our membership numbers.

On the right is a copy of a page from the June 2013 issue here showing a *Thryptomene denticulata*.

I took this picture of the same plant today. Some things don’t change!

Phil



### May Flower Table

#### Joan

Acacia jibberdingensis  
Correa backhousiana  
Correa 'Mallee Pastel'  
Correa seedling 'Lucky Pink'  
Correa 'Gwen'  
Correa 'Isabelle'  
Correa 'Federation Belle'  
Thryptomene denticulata

#### Phil

Hakea 'Burrendong Beauty'  
Hakea nodosa  
Hakea laurina  
Banksia spinulosa  
Banksia spinulosa 'Schnapper Point'  
Correa 'Autumn Blaze'  
Calytrix fraseri  
Crowea saligna (large flower)

#### David

Correa baeuerlenii  
Marianthus ringens  
Marianthus bicolor  
Correa 'White Delight'  
Correa 'Redex'  
Xerochrysum bracteatum  
Hemiandra pungens (upright form)  
Banksia marginata 'Mini Marg'  
Grevillea dimorpha (fine leaf form)  
Hakea myrtilodes  
Hakea seedling (myrtilodes x petiolaris)?  
Hakea 'Stockdale Sensation'  
Grevillea 'Superb'  
Grevillea 'Billy Bonkers'  
Grevillea 'Molly'

#### Tom

Banksia 'Giant Candles'

#### Kevin

Eucalyptus orbifolia  
Grevillea thelemanniana

### Plant of the Month



#### *Thryptomene denticulata*

*Thryptomene*: from Greek meaning 'broken' or 'made small'. (Probably refers to the small flowers)

*denticulata*: with small teeth (on the leaves)

Native to WA sandplains north of Perth.

A low spreading shrub 0.5m by 2m, with pinkish/mauve flowers. It prefers a sunny well drained site and is frost and drought hardy.

In a good year it will flower from Christmas time right through to September. This year it was so dry it didn't flower until May, with exception of one in a bed that got watered.

With so little flowering it is a really bright feature in the garden. Easily grown from cuttings.

Neil Marriott brought in an interesting form to the April meeting which was a completely prostrate, layering\* form. The commonly propagated form does not layer.



\* Layering: forming roots where the stems rest on the ground

# May Presentation: Ian Evans on Landscaping a Native Garden

Ian travelled from Bendigo to give some guidance to our group on landscaping a native garden, drawing on 40 years of experience. The evening was well-attended, with quite a few non-members popping in.



Ian based much of his talk on landscaping he has done on his own place in Bendigo, with a photographic record of progress.



To the front of Ian's property, bordering the roadway

## Preparation

When setting out to prepare beds and lawns, the main things we must consider are

1. Existing site conditions
  - existing vegetation & structures
  - soil contamination
  - weeds
  - weather conditions
  - slope
  - orientation
  - neighbouring properties
2. Sub-soil preparation
  - excavation to desired levels (in many Bendigo projects, rock is not far beneath the surface)
  - ripping of the sub-base
  - installation of root barriers
  - installation of drainage pipes and pits
  - installation irrigation mains and laterals
  - installation of lighting conduits
3. Drainage
  - 65mm or 100mm flexible drain coil
  - cover pipe with sock to prevent blockage
4. Topsoil
  - Ian prefers to source topsoil stripped from a subdivision development or roadworks, with 20% composted green waste added
5. Irrigation
  - Ian illustrated a latticework of polypipe laid over the area to be planted
6. Mulch
  - Organic
  - Inorganic



Ian demonstrating the advantages of growing plants in square tubes for good root development.

## Characteristics of different mulches

Organic Mulch		Inorganic Mulch	
Hay/pea straw Leaf Mulch Pine Woodchips or Pine bark Hardwood wood chips Recycled timber – shredded pallets/waste timber Almond/Apricot kernels Composted green waste		Gravels Course sands River pebbles Screened crushed rock Screened crushed scoria Screened recycled crushed concrete /Brick	
Pros	Cons	Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- usually cheaper than inorganic mulches.</li> <li>- easier to add to existing garden beds.</li> <li>- breakdown to add nutrients to the soils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- breakdown quickly and need topping up.</li> <li>- can moderate summer temperatures but also hold frosts around the plants in winter.</li> <li>- can harbour moulds and fungal diseases.</li> <li>- absorb water and do not let a large percentage of rainfall/ overhead irrigation through.</li> <li>- can compact and become hydrophobic.</li> <li>- can hold weed seeds.</li> <li>- can draw nutrients from the soil when decomposing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- don't breakdown or compact.</li> <li>- can substantially moderate summer temperatures and also retain and radiant heat overnight to provide some frost protection to plants in winter.</li> <li>- can provide a dry surface and reflect heat to provide protection from moulds and fungal diseases.</li> <li>- let a large percentage of rainfall/ overhead irrigation through.</li> <li>- provide ideal conditions for plant seeds to germinate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- usually dearer than organic mulches.</li> <li>- don't breakdown to add nutrients to the soils, though scoria does add nutrients</li> <li>- hold and reflect heat during a heatwave.</li> <li>- provide ideal conditions for weed seeds to germinate.</li> </ul>



A selection of mulch materials

## Other Tips

To make rocks look natural put at least 1/3 in the ground and keep flat.

Always prune before planting and avoid using round pots for growing on (winding root ball).

## Step construction

The 'magic number' when constructing steps is 700:



The formula used is  $2 \times \text{risers} + \text{a tread}$  should be equal to or less than 700mm

Risers should not be less than 110mm or greater than 190mm, ideally 165mm.

The best combination for steps is,  $2 \times \text{risers} (165\text{mm}) + 1 \times \text{tread} (350\text{mm}) = 680\text{mm}$

Stepping stones should be set at 700mm centre-point to centre-point spacings

## Pathways

Gravel pathways should consist of:

75-100mm base material of compacted crushed rock or recycled crushed concrete.

50-75mm of compacted selected top material, selected crushed toppings or decomposed granite rock.

Ideally have no more than a 1:20 fall (50mm over 1 metre), so as not to wash away during rain events

Be self-compacting so as not to be loose underfoot.

Ian concluded his talk with some projects that his company has worked on.



Finishing with that fireplace!

This is a monument reconstructed by Ian. The components, such as the troughs, were scattered all over Bendigo. The lights were made anew.

### Wednesday Morning Workshop

The following morning Ian held a workshop at the Kings': tackling a gentle slope of recently-cleared bracken. Again he focused on drainage, directing uphill water to either side of the house, with one side potentially going to a small wetland area where the water could be retained. Then he thought a retaining wall of sandstone boulders would go well on the western side of the house, above which a level garden bed could be planted with plants cascading over the rocks.

There was discussion about weed eradication, with that pesky and difficult-to-remove sorrel much in evidence. Ian suggested either spraying, or covering with builders' black plastic for a non-chemical, but lengthier, solution.

He also raised the idea of a coarse gravel pathway around the house, using something akin to Macedon toppings.

Ian is a welcome guest to our neck of the woods and his well-prepared presentations and generous offerings of his time are warmly appreciated. Thank you also to the Marriotts for organising Ian's visit and hosting him overnight.

John King

Australian Plants Society Grampians Group

# POMONAL NATIVE FLOWER SHOW

Pomonal Community Hall

Saturday 30th September & Sunday 1st October 2023

9.00am to 4.00pm

Admission \$5.00, children free

Cut Flower Displays  
Named specimens  
Book Sales  
Speakers

Refreshments  
Plant Sales  
Activities  
Village Market

Special Feature: Eucalypts  
Special Guest: Dean Nicolle



The 2023 **Pomonal Native Flower show** is fast approaching.

The theme this year is 'Eucalypts'

We have Dean Nicolle coming to speak on the best small eucalypts to have in your garden, as well as an update on the findings from current research on eucalypts. He will also be selling his new book, published in Feb 2023. '**Native Eucalypts of Victoria and Tasmania**' at the show.

If you have any ideas for what you would like to be part of the show please let us know, especially ideas for raffle prizes.

We would also appreciate it if you could collect gum nuts, particularly large ones that we can use for some displays.

Many thanks,  
Jocelyn and Fiona  
[pomonalnativeflowershow@apsvic.org.au](mailto:pomonalnativeflowershow@apsvic.org.au)

## Halls Gap Botanic Garden Update

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 last year.

Quite a few things to report:

We received funding for signage about indigenous use of plants and now it is completed. On the rear noticeboard is general information and then we have signs next to 10 of the most used plants. The signs are on aluminium, very similar to the ones by the Historical Society on the path to Venus Baths. The Peaks Trail (GPT) walkers come past it and we hope they learn about the way plants were used prior to colonisation.

The odd weather last year caused quite a few of our plants to die. Too wet and then too dry. We have some replanting to do, and we are most grateful to APS for offering us some new seedlings.

We are very short of volunteers at the moment. So many of us are celebrating the end of Covid by travelling, either in Australia or overseas. So, any of you would be most welcome to join us on Friday mornings. Or if another day suits you better do let me know.

We are co-operating with WAMA, and it is so good that they now have enough money and volunteers to go ahead. We see the two gardens as complementary. Ours in a valley with tall trees, WAMA is out on the plain. Their gardener, Ben Mackley, will give us some advice on pruning etc, and we may put some plants in our garden while beds are being prepared at WAMA. And we hope to share a plant labeller now ours is no longer available.

Margo Sietsma

## Visits to Native Gardens Around Hobart

Our Trip to Tasmania in the Winter by Neil and Wendy Marriott

After a very busy autumn cleaning up our gardens primarily for the official visit of the International Dendrological Society (tree lovers!!), with the terrific help of our wonderful new gardener Pete (thanks to Anthea for connecting us with him), we decided we needed a bit of a break and headed down to Tassy for 12 nights, sailing across on the Spirit of Tasmania.

We were a bit fearful of what the weather would be like, and as we headed off the forecast came in for rain and storms –oh no!! After a lovely drive down from Devonport, dropping in to catch up with old neighbours on the way, we arrived at our holiday spot at Seven Mile Beach east of Hobart. No rain first day, but that night it poured!!

The next day broke fine and sunny, though the air was noticeably cooler than back home! It turned out to be perfect walking weather so off to the long local beach for a lovely walk. Amazingly, for the next couple of weeks the only rains we got were at night, with cool but sunny days –just perfect for driving and walking around SE Tassy!! One day we went into Hobart to visit the Hobart Botanic Gardens –we were keen to see their new Tasmanian Native Garden and were not disappointed –they have done a wonderful job, beautifully displaying most of the state’s endemic and rare plant species, landscaped in imaginative and pleasant groupings.

One of the most beautiful plants we observed in the Hobart Botanic Garden was *Banksia marginata* ‘Petal Point’ –this location is on the northern tip of the coast north of Launceston, pointing out into Bass Strait. This form of *Banksia marginata* is a dense low compact form to around 1.5m tall and 2m wide with small leaves and masses of showy flowers. We admired numerous specimens of this *Banksia* planted in various locations around the gardens. Plant labels were mostly present and accurate, but not very durable.



*Banksia marginata* ‘Petal Point’



Signage showing wear at Hobart Botanic Garden – compare this with the signage below in the Tasmanian Bushland Garden

Another wonderful garden we visited was the Tasmanian Bushland Garden at Buckland, NE of Sorrel. This garden, run entirely by volunteers, displays Tasmania’s south-eastern endemic and interesting plants in a lovely 20 ha natural bushland setting which includes an old quarry. The plants are displayed in gardens purpose-built for each of the major soil types found throughout this part of the state.



A beautiful metal Wedge-tailed Eagle sculpture in the gardens



*Banksia marginata* 'Superbush'



Wendy in front of a tall form of *Grevillea australis*

A completely different form of *Banksia marginata* 'Superbush' which we loved was growing here to 4m tall and only 1.5m wide with fine, dense foliage. It comes from the southern forests of Tasmania so requires moister conditions than other forms – a pity as it would be a beauty in the garden! It may be okay for John and Joss or members in Halls Gap but not our 'desert'!!

The Tasmanian Bushland Garden has excellent permanent signage on its plants – something that makes a superb botanic garden! Aren't we so lucky to get the APS Vic grant so we can put lovely professional, long lasting signs on all our plants around the Pomonal Hall, in Jane's Garden and at WAMA!!

The gardens have a series of walking tracks, with shelters and toilets, and a lovely solar powered waterfall from the top of the quarry!! The gardens are further enhanced by rusty fauna sculptures dotted through the different areas.

Another exciting plant for us was *Grevillea australis* – the ONLY *Grevillea* that occurs naturally in Tasmania! In the gardens they have at least 4 distinct forms of this species, each one distinct in its habit, from prostrate to a tall shrub of 2m, with fine to broad leaves and even one with large cream flowers compared to the normal small white flowers.

Another very interesting native garden we visited was Inverawe Garden, Margate, south of Hobart. Here, on the banks of North West Bay Bill and Margaret Chestnut have converted a weed infested old farm into a beautiful garden. There are many interesting Tasmanian as well as mainland plants on display, and dotted along the well maintained walking tracks are Bill's whimsical poems and sculptures. The interpretive signage is highly professional and extremely interesting, outlining the early history of the site and quizzical interactive signs to involve kids a well. We were impressed by their extensive list of birds they have recorded for the garden, which includes ALL the Tasmanian endemics.





A lovely Tasmanian Sheoak that we saw in several gardens was *Allocasuarina duncanii* 'Conical Sheoak' which, as the common name suggests is a beautiful conical small tree to 5-8m.



One of the Tasmanian endemics we admired was *Hakea epiglottis* 'Beaked Hakea' with masses of small beaked fruits, rather like small versions of the fruits on our local *Hakea rostrata*. *Hakea epiglottis* is a dense erect shrub from the east coast of Tasmania and we were fortunate to get a number of young plants from the wonderful 'Plants of Tasmania Nursery' at Ridgeway on the slopes of Mt Wellington, Hobart.

On the very last day we decided to head up to Mt Wellington again, but were stopped by snow about two-thirds of the way up. We got a beautiful coffee from an amazing little coffee shop at the car park here and wandered round in the freezing air admiring the beautiful wet forest native understorey. Later that day it poured –the first rains to trouble us for the whole holiday! There is so much to see and enjoy in Tasmania, and even a short break in early winter can be ever so enjoyable!!

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/>

## 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  
Lisa Ashdowne