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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 18th July 2pm
Pomonal Hall
Neil Macumber & Neil Marriott - "Birdswing Tours to WA"
Afternoon tea to be provided by A-K

Contents

Last Meeting	1
Members' Gardens	4
Plant Profile	6
From the RHSV	8
Behind the Scenes	9
Group Calendar	9
Winter-Flowering	10

Last Meeting



Desert Discovery Tour with Neil Macumber



On a cold Saturday afternoon the brave gathered at Pomonal Hall to listen to a very interesting presentation by Neil Macumber on his involvement in a research trip in Western Australia in August 2022. Desert Discovery describe themselves as follows: " Desert Discovery Inc. is a non-profit voluntary organisation with the principal purpose of ensuring the protection and enhancement of the natural environment in remote regions of Australia". In addition it provides opportunities for natural science volunteers to gain experience in field research. Areas targeted are predominantly in the arid regions of Western Australia where sites are surveyed with return visits over a number of years. The group generally consists of 6 main teams including Botany, Birds, Mammals and Reptiles, Pioneer history, Management and Logistics. On the trip

Neil took part in, there were also entomologists trapping and collecting specimens to be taken back to the WA Museum. In all 52 people attended the trip which lasted for two weeks. Everyone needed to be well organised, have a sturdy 4 wheel drive vehicle and be fully self-sufficient, as it was a very long way to the corner store!



Setting up the meeting tent at Yeo, with Yeo homestead in the background

The location for the trip was Yeo Lake Nature Reserve located some 600 km north of Kalgoorlie, where the only local source of fresh water and clay pans might act as a draw card for many species. To this end camera traps were set up in



Senna artemisioides – ssp. *filifolia* Shrub 1 to 2 Mtrs

likely positions while pitfall trap lines for reptiles and mammals, box and hamilton traps also for mammals, and light traps for insects were established in the surrounding area. The vegetation varied from a predominance of *Triodia* and *Chenopod* to *Mulga* woodlands and beautiful rocky outcrops, known as breakaways, sitting

dramatically above the red sand dunes. The majority of the vegetation was low growing with many *Acacia* spp, *Solanum* spp, 3 *Triodia* spp, *Eremophila* (4 species) *Einadia nutans* or nodding saltbush, *Dodonaea lobulata* bead hopbush, *Senna artemisioides* or



Anthroche pannosa



Bush Tomato - *Solanum* sp.

silver cassia, Quandong *Santalum acuminatum?*, and mistletoe on the acacias to name just a few.

In addition to the plant life, fauna species were targeted and there was a hope that the elusive marsupial mole might be found in the dune country as well as the Great Desert Skink..



A couple of the crew digging rectangular holes to sample for Marsupial Mole activity overnight on sand dunes

This was not to be but pitfall traps produced Sandy Inland Mouse, and Mitchell's Hopping Mouse which Neil pointed out are not marsupials but native rodents. Other mammals included Ningai (bitey bitey) *Sminthopsis spp* or dunnart, and possible

evidence of stick-nest rats. Reptiles included geckos and dragons, species not recorded...by me that is! Birds included but not limited to Inland and Chestnut-rumped Thornbills, Red-capped Robin and the beautiful Splendid Wren. The entomologists captured a large array of moths, caddis, and butterflies as well as other insect groups.



Mitchell's Hopping Mouse

Overall this was a fascinating and informative talk which probably made a few of us look at the next trip in 2024. Many thanks to Neil for such an interesting Saturday afternoon journey.

Margot



Triodia and Marsupial Mole (from google images 2023)

See <http://desertdiscoveryinc.com.au/> for more info.

Thank you to Neil for permission to reprint some of his photos

Starting From Scratch Margot Galletly

You begin with an open paddock, house-building rubbish, contaminated soil and, having completely obliterated the budget on the build, you're still dreaming of having a garden. This is where I found myself 2 years ago. New to the area, I had no idea of what would grow, having gone from heavy black volcanic soils to the bottomless sand of a fluvial flood plain, and from a temperate climate close to the sea, to hot and dry and massive frosts. There was virtually no slope, and plenty of very keen roos, deer and emus that selectively pruned off everything except marigolds! Yes I know they aren't native so to the purists among you I committed a sin. Something bright, uneaten and needing virtually no water brought some early joy!

I persisted and after digging just one small bed, mulching with wood chips, and planting all sorts of natives (no marigolds this time), I watched and waited. I had to give in and put a hotwire around it after the wallabies pruned the dianella to the ground, and the deer ate the grevilleas. For a while very little happened. The plants didn't grow but they didn't die. Hand watering with cans every other day through the summer was tiresome but necessary with only tanks and an uncertain season.

I really only wrote this to show some early successes, so sorry if I've rambled on too much, but perhaps it sets the scene. Thanks to plants from my family, numerous nursery trips and sage advice from APS members, I persisted. Don't overwater, start with small areas that could be protected and expect losses.

Here are some early successes, still amongst the so and so sorrel which I have yet to control.



Grevillea lanigera, *Bracheantha* spp,
Crowea saligna (large flowered form)

The grass trees are starting to grow and free of grazers, Lomandra and Dianella are also fine. Most of the grevilleas and some of the banksias are also doing ok.

It's a start. I will persist!

Pycnosorus globosus (Billy Buttons)



Isopogon formosus (Pink Sparkler)



Correa pulchella (Little Cate) with *Leucophyta brownii* in the foreground.



As an afterthought, could anyone give me advice about the chrysocephalum pictured?

These come up naturally all over the place and some say they are weeds, others suggest to keep them. Any thoughts out there greatly appreciated.

Plant Profile by *Dave Handscombe*



Banksia menziesii shrub form

Species: *Banksia menziesii*

Banksia: Named after Joseph Banks, botanist and scientist on several expeditions most notably Cook's expedition to observe the transit of Venus. He later became the President of the Royal Society and remained a key figure in botanical and zoological investigations for over 40 years.

menziesii: named after Archibald Menzies, a surgeon and naturalist on board HMS Discovery during the expedition that named King George Sound near Albany in 1791.

Common Name: Firewood Banksia.

Family: Proteaceae

Dimensions: Height: variable from 2 to 10 or more metres, width up to 10 metres.

There are no registered cultivars on the ACRA site and no Plant Breeders Rights current.



Various stages of the development of the inflorescence



(and previous photo) - some of the colour forms of the flowers

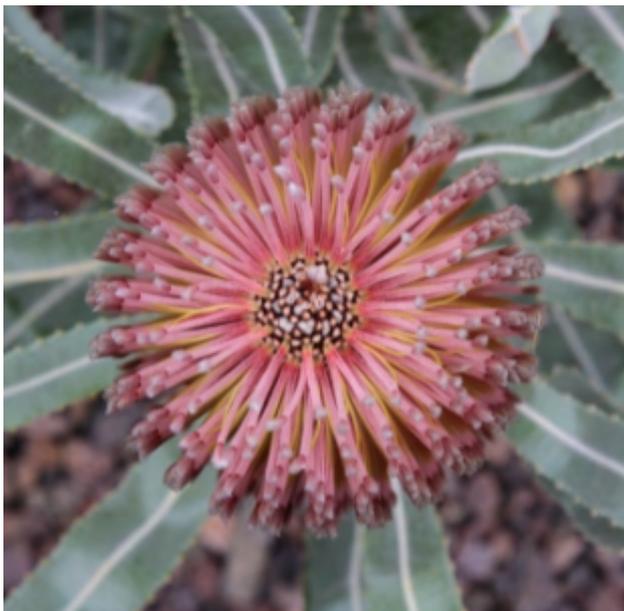
Banksia menziesii occurs in the coastal plains of southwest WA from Pinjarra in the south to the Murchison River in the north with a few isolated populations inland from Perth.

Banksia menziesii grows in areas with rainfall in the range of 350 – 900mm with well-drained sandy soils, but will grow in heavier loams as long as they are free draining, with a pH that is lightly acidic to neutral.

It tolerates full sun to partial shade, is hardy to moderate frosts, dry conditions and having a lignotuber, can be pruned heavily once established. Flower colour is

quite variable ranging from bronze, chocolate, salmon, yellow and shades of red. Flower colour may vary from season to season depending on temperature and rainfall. It is more common to find the shrub form in nurseries as these are more suited to smaller gardens.

Propagation is relatively easy by seed but flower colour may not be true to type.



The inflorescence from above



The distinct patterns on the cone are revealed after the flowers drop off which is another feature of the plant.

From the RHSV

Our group is a member of the Royal Horticultural Society of Victoria and, as such, receives their quarterly journal *Gardeners' Gazette*. If you would like to read any issues, just say.

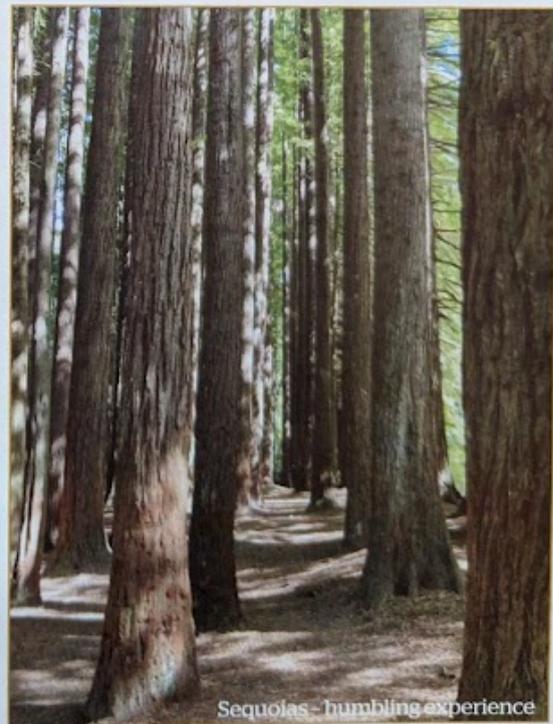
Here is an article by Jane Edmanson that you may find interesting. Imagine that full of grain!



The Murtoa Stick Shed - a great celebration of ingenuity

Recently I had the pleasure of revisiting the Murtoa Stick Shed, in the Wimmera. Built in 1941 in World War II to store a glut of wheat at a time when exports were restricted. It is was a large grain storage, the length of five swimming pools, and when you walk into this immense space it feels like a cathedral. It is called the 'Stick Shed' because there are 560 poles, 56 rows of eucalyptus trees cut from the Dandenong Ranges that support the corrugated iron roof. It is a credit to the Murtoa township that it still exists, and they welcome visitors. It is one of my favourite Australian buildings and what an amazing use of Australian trees in a time of need. A National Heritage Cultural icon.

Website - www.thestickshed.com.au



Sequoias - humbling experience

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GARDENERS' GAZETTE Winter 2023 17

Behind the Scenes

APSGG Label Grant

APS Vic offers annual grants to its district groups to support worthwhile courses. Neil Marriott submitted a pretty comprehensive application for funds for decent labels for the gardens our group oversees: Pomonal Hall, Jane's Garden and WAMA Endemic. We have been granted \$4824.70 for a laser engraver, metal label blanks & stakes. The laser connects to a computer on which the label design can be set up and then sent to the engraver. It can engrave pretty well anything, including QR codes, and so we will set up plant species links on the APS Vic website and have them redirect to wherever on the web best presents further information on each species to the interested visitor e.g. VicFlora, ANPSA etc.; we can even write up our own notes if information elsewhere is deemed lacking and have the QR code take the enquirer there. When the target gardens have labels, we expect to offer the labelling facility to members.

ANPSA Conference 2024

Planning is well underway for the biennial conference of the native plant national body next year, to be held in Melbourne with the theme "Gardens for Life". It will run from 30th Sep to 4th Oct. The official web page is <https://apsvic.org.au/anpsa-biennial-conference-2024/>, which contains the latest information, newsletters and that's also where you can register your interest for event updates.

Chris Long HLM

Congratulations to Chris, former APS Vic president & secretary, for his award of Honorary Life Membership to APS Vic.

APS Vic COMM & AGM

... will be hosted by us on Sat the 23rd Sep. Our committee is organising the day, followed by daily activities to encourage attendees to stay on for the flower show. Grampians members will be welcome to take part in all events, though naturally reserving Thu and Fri for flower show preparations.

Group Calendar

PH = Pomonal Hall, SNH = Stawell Neighbourhood House
Subject to change; walks will be arranged with an eye to the weather

August

Tue 21st 7:30pm PH Adam Merrick, Trust for Nature Covenants

September

Tue 19th 7:30pm SNH Noushka Reiter - Native Orchids

Sat 23rd APS Vic COMM & AGM PH

Post-COMM activities could include

Sat: garden visit and dinner at Barney's

Sun-Wed: bird walks, orchid walks, Gar Falls walk (moderate), Heatherlie Quarry walk (easy), WAMA tour, Winery visit

Thu 28th-Fri 29th Flower show preparation: vases, flowers, hall, marquee

October

Sat 30th-Sun 1st Pomonal Flower Show

Outings: walks in local area

Tue 17th 7:30pm AGM PH Ade Foster Frogs

Sun 22nd-Wed 25th Little Desert campout with Goods

November

Tue 21st Meeting SNH Monica and Phil trip up north

Outings: walks in local area - higher country "2nd spring"

December

Tue 19th Xmas break up at Jocelyn & John's

[See also plant shows & sales of other APS Vic district groups](#)

Winter-Flowering

Some lovely things in Andrea's garden



Hakea crassinervia - Burradong
Hakea



Hakea lehmanniana - Blue
Hakea (best it has flowered; a
special plant, with seed from
Kevin Collins)

You are encouraged to contribute to future editions of this newsletter, be it photos, articles, questions, suggestions or whatever; send to

grampiansnewsletter@apsvic.org.au

Thank you to all those who contributed to this edition

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