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NEXT MEETING

Sunday 15th Oct 2:30pm
Frank's Place
44 Killough Rd Great Western
Be self-sufficient in arvo tea & seating

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Group Notes

October Activities

Poor Monica Coleman is not at all well and will not be able to do the planned presentation of her & Phil's trip up north. They have also had to cancel joining the Little Desert trip. We all wish them both well, and hope to see them before too long. We have not been able to arrange an alternative speaker for October, but Frank Azzopardi has kindly let us visit his property. Frank has transformed 40 acres that had one tree and a salt-pan when he took ownership. Note that this is on Sunday afternoon, the 15th of October, and **there will be no Tuesday evening meeting this month.**

This time last month ten members had registered for the Little Desert camp-out, led by Maree & Graham Goods. There are now 21 registered! Look for a report on it in the next newsletter.

November AGM

Our AGM will be held on Tuesday the 17th November at Stawell Neighbourhood House. All positions will be declared vacant. Please consider nominating to join the committee and help keep things ticking over.

Our Newsletter

From November our new editor will be Wendy Marriott. Thank you Wendy.

September 2024

Yes, a year away, but two items to have in mind. The flower show will be a week earlier than usual (21st & 22nd) so we don't clash with the ANSPA conference hosted by APS Vic. We can also see if we get a better attendance since we won't be sharing the Saturday with the AFL Grand Final, and we won't have that Sunday switch to daylight savings!

Following the very successful attendance of Dean Nicolle at this year's show, there is a mooted trip to Currency Creek SA late August/early September 2024 to visit his eucalypt arboretum. APS Warrnambool & Wimmera Growers are also interested in joining us. We will contact the local native plant group there to arrange other outings. We last visited SA as a group in November 2017.

Last Meeting

APSGG Meeting Stawell 19th September 2023

Guest Speaker: Noushka Reiter, Senior Research Scientist (Conservation) at Cranbourne Botanic Gardens, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. She is involved in the Orchid Conservation Program, which includes the protection, propagation, and reintroduction of endangered species of Australian native orchids.

Noushka, a highly qualified and knowledgeable person on all things associated with our native orchids, spoke passionately about the threats to many of our Australian plants. Some of the figures she presented were disturbing to say the least. 1426 plant species are threatened with extinction. In Victoria 1,617 species are listed as threatened. 45% of orchids have IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) threatened species status globally, with over 1800 species in Australia. Almost 200 are threatened with extinction. To save them, it is necessary to translocate them, either to save them from destruction e.g., from land clearing, or to simply conserve them. Optimal translocation needs about 500 individual plants to make it likely to succeed.

Key aspects of successful translocation include pollination and seed set, and for orchids, reliance is on symbiotic fungi and the availability of suitable pollinators. Both the fungi and the insect pollinators are very specific to the individual species of orchid.

Noushka explained that the research and works being carried out involves shires, state departments and universities as well as private contributors. Translocation has many complicated steps including hand pollination in the field, identifying natural pollinators, and isolating symbiotic fungi for culture in the laboratory. Propagating from seed with the appropriate fungi is then possible. Germination is reliant on the fungi. The symbiotic fungi may grow in the roots of some species or the collar of others.

The hope is that laboratory produced breeding populations will eventually be reintroduced into suitable protected habitat.

So far 210 species of orchid have been propagated in the laboratory.

Threats to successful reintroduction include herbivory, predominantly by Black Wallabies and before fencing and guarding the "swampies", which are broadly increasing in number, were eating everything, resulting in only 6% survival. Low fencing, which stopped the wallabies but allowed the passage of

kangaroos, resulted in 84% plant survival plus a 25% seed set. Tuber size was also found to be a significant element in survival rates so the team now plant adult plants with larger tubers.

Other interesting peculiarities of the symbiotic fungi are that they can vary with different habitats and that specific species of fungi will only aid germination of the plants at a particular temperature.

Spider orchids are the most threatened genus in Australia. It has been discovered that 127 species are supported by just 10 species of fungi, and seemingly total unlinked species in different states can share the same fungi.

Pollinators: Noushka explained that pollination, crucial to successful reintroduction of native orchids, is largely carried out by wasps so considerable effort has been placed on understanding which species are involved and how they operate.

It has been discovered that there are 3 different ways in which the plants and pollinators relate. Some orchids look and smell like food to lure certain wasps in but don't in fact provide either. Some actually do provide food, and a 3rd group operate by deception as they emit scents that smell like pheromones of a particular female wasp. This sends the male into a "mating frenzy" with the flower and so the pollen is collected and distributed. If there are no suitable pollinators in a translocation site there is no point introducing the orchid there. Little is known yet about the wasps and more research is needed to understand their needs.

A specific example given by Noushka was of the Yellow-lipped Spider Orchid of which there are now less than 600 plants. Thymine wasps are the pollinators which the orchid attracts using chemical cues. Changes in climate have not significantly affected flowering but monthly rainfall does affect pollination.

Some things they now know:

- Spider orchids don't like being planted near shrubs!
- They do like being planted with grasses, lichens and mosses.
- They do like leaf litter.

The web of interactions, needs and species peculiarities painted a picture of a complex and seemingly impossible task of rescuing these precious orchids from the brink. However, Noushka and her team of meticulous and dedicated people are actually achieving this in many species. Her presentation left a sense of awe and admiration for the work.

Margot Galletly

COMM & Flower Show Recap

The COMM

Almost 60 attended from across Victoria and about 25 stayed on after the meeting weekend for several days of activities. It all went pretty well without a hitch, aided by superb weather. Thank you to everyone who helped with feeding, guiding and cleaning up after the throng .. fantastic job. All enjoyed Phil Williams' lovely garden and his leadership at Heatherlie Quarry, Neil Marriott's tour of WAMA, Panrock Ridge, Seppelt's garden and a delightful walk beyond Gar Falls, Fiona led a keen group into the Seppelt's tunnels, Catherine & Clive showed an interested group their wetland and that big tree, and Neil Macumber came up trumps with his two bird walks.

The Show

Setting up.

All hands on deck as the hall was set up, marquee erected and freshly-picked flowers started arriving (a special thanks to the Comptons, Long Gully Rd, who aren't members but were happy for us to pick in the Handscombes' old garden). Also thanks to Kerry and Stuart Thorpe who provided us with the stunning *Eucalyptus preissiana* and some magnificent grass tree spikes. Donna and Trevor Newal kindly let Fiona and Jocelyn pick in their absence and Glenda sent flowers picked from her garden. New labels were printed, as required, and the vases laid out.

Special thanks to Jeanine & Mike Petts from APS Mitchell who were just visiting, but worked on our behalf until the light gave out.

Saturday

There is always that lingering doubt during a spell of fine, still weather (like we had in the week leading up to the show), that it will hold and remain settled for a coming event. The Saturday was glorious. Paul Kelly gave a welcome to country in the marquee (he mentioned that his birthday was exactly the same date as that other Paul Kelly .. how totally improbable is that?!), followed by a walk along Wildflower Drive and Robins Rd, where Phil, Jocelyn & Anthea had placed identification information on eucalypts of note. Many thanks to all the 'extras' who made the walk such a fun event.

Dean Nicolle, the eucalypt expert from Currency Creek Arboretum south of Adelaide (see also Group Notes earlier in this newsletter), spoke to a packed marquee on his favourite smaller eucalypts. Dean is not only an expert in his field, but also a very capable speaker who presented with enthusiasm and interesting insights and his books sold like hot cakes. Attila Kapitany is always an entertaining speaker, and he passionately shared his experience with brachychitons and Australian succulents.

Sunday

Early Sunday morning that doubt that the ideal weather could continue proved true, with gale-force winds bearing down on our hapless marquee. Alison was the first on scene (at what would have been 6am if daylight savings hadn't arrived). If you hadn't heard, our temporary structure on the oval was no match for nature's gusts, and bent poles and sheared welds made it unfit for use that day. We will get it repaired and tether it better next time.

In the Men's Shed meeting room, our wonderful Denis Crawford presented a truly excellent selective snapshot of how insects interact with eucalypts. He was followed by Dean Nicolle, then Neil Marriott's excellent presentation of WAMA & Grampians' endemics. Unfortunately attendance in the shed didn't match what we have experienced in the marquee. We will try to tempt Denis to present his talk at an APS GG meeting.

A good turn-out saw many hands make light work of packing up, with the traditional shared meal to follow.

A last word

Numbers were down on our better years (in a good year, we can expect over 1,000 visitors), with almost 800 paying to enter the hall over the weekend.

Thank you to everyone who helped make our show one of the best around, especially to Jocelyn and Fiona ably assisted by Andrea.

Thank you Fiona for your lovely floral arrangements and for devoting your weekend to selling beautiful bunches of flowers on behalf of the group. Needless to say you sold out.

Spring Flowers at Home

Wattles - Catherine Pye

[Ed. Catherine submitted this at the beginning of September, hence most wattles mentioned would have finished flowering]

This winter the wattles have all started coming out and I have been observing them.

On our property at Fyans Creek we have only 5 wattles

- Silver wattle near the seasonal creek – which we wondered if they had been planted but we see other patches of silver wattle around the area. They are spreading and occasionally flower in august
- Blackwood is flowering now. We have many trees dotted around the property.
- Black wattle – many old and large ones and lots of new ones popping up, they are not yet flowering.
- Wirilda wattle to the north along the seasonal creek, but only in small numbers
- Acacia oxycedrus, the spike wattle growing with our patches of heath land to the north
- Along the roadside near our fence and northern boundary there is a small number of Varnish Wattle bushes but we have none on our property.
- Along the roadsides near us there are Golden wattle and Acacia genistifolia. Which surprisingly we don't have.
- I asked John and Jocelyn how many wattles they have and they have 12 different types.

[Ed. Silver (*dealbata*), Black (*mearnsii*), Spike (*oxycedrus*), Hedge (*paradoxa*), Ploughshare (*gunii*), Golden (*pycnantha*), Myrtle (*myrtifolia*), Wirilda (*provincialis*), Narrow-leaf (*mucronata*), Juniper (*ulicifolia*), Prickly Moses (*verticillata*) & Blackwood (*melanoxylon*)]

Maybe our wattle was removed for tannin or bark or timber and as the property was a sheep property the sheep ate them before they could regenerate. Early black wattle is an introduced and invasive weed from NSW and there are scattered plants around the Grampians. There are a few gold dust wattle plants on the road side at Lake Lonsdale and along the road to Horsham and from Halls Gap to Stawell. I am not sure if these are natural or planted.



Golden Wattle *Acacia pycnantha*



Blackwood *Acacia melanoxylon*



Silver Wattle *Acacia dealbata*



Spike Wattle *Acacia oxycedrus*



Early Black Wattle *Acacia decurrens*



Gold-dust Wattle *Acacia acinacea*

Spring Flowers in the Outback

Mary-Anne has been on the road, and sent in these beautiful outback images of flora

... "on the walk 'Valley of the Winds' out at Kata Tjuta. It is a beautiful 7 km walk. There had been rain 8 weeks earlier and so many wildflowers."





Friends' garden at Alice Springs, with the beautiful East MacDonnell Ranges as the backdrop



Brunonia australis



Aluta maisonneuvii (formerly *Thryptomene maisonneuvii*)



Everlasting Daisy sp.

Group Calendar

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

October

Sun 15th 2:30pm Frank's place, Great Western

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

November

Tue 21st Meeting & AGM SNH Ade Foster Frogs

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

December

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

January

No meeting

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

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

APS Vic Grampians Committee

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