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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 21st Nov 7:30pm
Stawell Neighbourhood House
AGM & Ade Foster on Frogs
Supper L-Z

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Announcements

November AGM

Our AGM will be held after the speaker, on Tuesday the 21st November at Stawell Neighbourhood House. All positions will be declared vacant. We start fresh. All members are requested to consider joining the committee, especially welcome are new members. To help keep the group ticking over, please nominate yourself for any job you can help with: Social media, garden labels, show subcommittee etc. Two main jobs, Secretary and President, have become too big, so perhaps you'd like to job share: e.g. help the secretary by checking emails, or making notes at a meeting; or maybe you could try your hand at chairing a meeting, or selecting speakers, etc. Many things currently get done and keep group activities interesting but new ideas, new people are needed.

Proxy procedure: If you can't make the meeting next Tuesday, let someone know and they can nominate or vote on your behalf.

Xmas Break-Up

Our end-of-year break up will be at Jocelyn & John King's.

When: Tuesday 19th Dec from 5pm

Where: 481 Long Gully Rd Pomonal (cross Redman Rd and pass camping ground on left & house on right and proceed for 300m down laneway sign-posted *No Through Rd*; enter gate at left. Cross dry creekbed, pass white weatherboard to the right and continue along driveway)

What to bring: something to sit on and self-sufficient in food and beverages. Bbq facilities and kitchen available.

October Meeting

In lieu of an evening meeting for October, with Monica Coleman being unwell, Adam Merrick unavailable and Ade Foster unable to change from November, Frank Azzopardi very graciously, (though it must be said somewhat reluctantly), opened the gates of his property to the group on a wet Sunday afternoon. Frank's humility makes him a quiet man, but we sensed his pride as we walked and talked. He explained his methods and showed us the achievements made over the last 40 years, on his 40 acres at the foot of the Great Western Sugarloaf. And the rain stopped!

What a dramatic change he has made in 40 years! Once degraded land with eroded gullies in the middle and a large salt pan on the lower reaches, to a productive walnut farm in the 80s (which ceased with the millennium drought), but, Frank explained how he'd harvested water and planted deep-rooted windbreaks to lower the water table until now it is a beautiful farm with tall trees and beautiful wetlands. With careful plant selection of salt tolerant gums including *Eucalyptus occidentalis* Swamp Yate and possibly *Euc sargentii* Salt River Gum, Frank has removed the salty water from the landscape. A large salt scald is now a beautiful wetland for wildlife, with numerous water birds when we were there. The locating of a single Swamp Sheoak *Casuarina glauca* has now suckered vigorously to stop erosion along a fully recovered drainage line through the property. Rainwater now flows cleanly into two lovely large dams that supply all the water needs of the property.

We then walked through a more recent plantation of native shrubs, mostly local, Banksias, Grevilleas, Hakeas and bottlebrushes. Once established they are rarely watered, all were grown by Frank from seed, and his latest venture is growing edible native fruits, vegies and fruit trees.

In front of the house Frank has a lovely mixed garden of Grevilleas, Banksias and many other showy plants, mostly propagated by Frank by seed with many in full flower. Then on to Frank's hothouse where he does all his propagating as well as growing pineapple, mango, bananas, avocados and guava - all tropical fruits. This was originally built to graft his walnuts, though Frank's venture into native plants began after finding seed of *Banksia lemniiana* (the one that hangs upside down) on a fishing trip to Dimboola. He has lately changed to big pots as the ground gets very cold in winter, and with good results.

Frank's philosophy is you are better off planting half a dozen trees of the right variety in the right place than planting a forest in the wrong place! After a most enjoyable tour of the garden and tropical house, we adjourned inside for a lovely cuppa and tasty afternoon tea. Thank you to Frank and Ann for telling us your wonderful story of transformation of a bare, run down paddock into a productive and beautiful farm.

By Ann Hodgson with collaboration from John King & the Marriotts

Little Desert Trip

All went as planned; 21 Grampians members and friends met at Lake Charlegrark before embarking in 4WD convoy into the Western Block of the Little Desert. Maree and Graham had made a prior recce and pronounced that "there were lots of Shiny Tea Tree". Old hands at leading tours and clearly experts at managing group expectations, the two days we spent in the national park were spectacular. What follows are some reflections from some of those who came along.

Maryanne: I thoroughly enjoyed Tuesday in western part of the LD with Maree and Graham Goods as the tour leaders. A real privilege to have their knowledge of the area and the plants.



Anthea: We got to visit a part of the park which is only accessible via sandy 4WD tracks, so for those of us who don't have 4WDs or wouldn't venture onto those deep sand tracks and dunes alone, it was a rare and wonderful experience. And to be taken by Maree and Graham, who had previously checked out where various Little Desert secrets were hiding (like the yellow Gompholobium and the last of the spider orchids) it was probably a once in a lifetime experience.

We also got to see the Park in two completely different moods. On Monday it was basking in gentle sunshine, showing off its masses of Golden Pennants, prostrate Kunzea (muntries) and pink Calytrix .. and dunes in flower with white (and sometimes pink) Leptospermum. Then, after a wild night (especially for those in very small tents) we got to see the Park in motion. Broom bushes tossing, thousands of grass trees dancing, the arms of the Leptospermum bushes jitterbugging. And in the quiet spaces in between, looking perfectly at home in the dry sand, we found (what seemed like) half the little flowering plants in Maree and Graham's book. And the daisies! White and purple (for those of us who didn't know our Brachiscomes from our Olearias and Argentipalliums). It was an APS feast for our eyes and hearts.



Catherine:

Little Desert Trip October 2023

Day 1

We stayed at Lake Charlegrark. From here we headed towards the SA border (Francis) and turned north into the Western Block of the Little Desert. The aim was to drive along the Mt Moffatt Road to Mt Moffatt and back and stop to see plants along the way. Mostly driving on sand but there were some clay pans with ruts and water to negotiate. The first plants we notice are the Muntries *Kunzea pomifera* underfoot, carpeting the roadsides, and the many Yellow Gums *Eucalyptus leucoxyton* and Buloke *Allocasuarina luehmannii*. Silver Banksia *Banksia marginata*. Daphne Heath *Brachyloma daphnoides*. *Dodonaea viscosa* subsp. *viscosa* to 4m high. *Neurachne alopecuroidea* (Foxtail Mulga Grass).

Mt Moffatt dam - Water plants including *Eleocharis atricha*, *Ornduffia reniformis*, *Neopaxia australasica*, *Craspedia paludicola* - Swamp Billy button. *Eryngium vesiculosum* - Prickfoot. *Lobelia pratioides* - Poison Lobelia. *Utricularia beagleholei* - Beaglehole's Bladderwort. Swamp Wallaby Grass. The cute *Myriocephalus rhizocephalus* - Woolly Heads.

Along the road and not flowering : *Acacia brachybotrya* Grey Mulga and *Acacia paradoxa* Hedge Wattle. Three types of Sheoaks: *Allocasuarina mackliniana* subsp. *xenophilia*, *Allocasuarina muelleriana*- Slaty, and the small, bluish, Dwarf Sheoak with fine leaves *Allocasuarina pusilla*.

We found a single multi-flowering *Caladenia cucullata* - Hooded Orchid. *Dampiera dysantha* - Shrubby Dampiera. *Burchardia umbellata* - Milkmaids. *Microseris lanceolata* - Yam Daisy. *Poranthera microphylla*- Small Poranthera. *Tetratheca ciliata* - Pinkbells. *Dillwynia hispida* - Red Parrot Pea. *Daviesia brevifolia* - Leafless Bitterpea carrying seed pods this time of year. *Goodenia geniculata* -Bent Goodenia.

Further on near the SA border we saw *Choretum chrysanthum* - Golden Sourbush. *Thomasia petalocalyx* -Paper Flower. Plus either *Olearia floribunda* or *Olearia lanuginosa*, small bushes not in flower.

Along the Mt Moffatt Track: We stopped to look at a big Grass Tree 3m high with one big stem at the base and multiple stems branching off higher up. It



Clive Carlyle

was here we spotted a Bearded Dragon sunbaking on a bush. *Hibbertia riparia* -Upright Guinea Flower. Fields of *Glischrocaryon behrii* -Golden Pennants. *Grevillea ilicifolia* subsp. *ilicifolia* - Kiteleaf Grevillea. *Pimelea humilis*- Common Rice Flower. Here we saw three wattles, none in flower - *Acacia spinescens* Spiny Wattle with seed pods, *Acacia acinacea* Gold Dust Wattle and *Acacia hakeoides* Hakea Wattle. *Lomandra collina* - Pale Matrush in flower. *Microtis* Onion Orchid. At lunch we saw *Calytrix tetragona* -Common Fringe Myrtle, *Podotheca angustifolia* -Sticky Longheads. *Pterostylis aciculiformis* -Slender Ruddy Greenhoods hiding amongst other vegetation and dying back. *Melaleuca brevifolia* as small bushes not in flower - Mallee Honeymyrtle. *Daucus glochidiatus* - Australian Carrot. *Pultenaea pedunculata* - Matted Bushpea forming small mats. Further north *Melaleuca wilsonii* - Violet Honey Myrtle striking in colour. A small roadside patch of the very pretty delicately pink shaded *Grevillea lavendulacea* - Lavender Grevillea. *Argentipallium obtusifolium* - Blunt Everlasting everywhere with a few *Argentipallium blandowskianum* - Woolly Everlasting just coming out in bud. *Brunonia australis* - Blue Pincushions. Along the roadsides we could see *Exocarpus sparteus* - Broom Ballart and the ubiquitous *Melaleuca uncinata* - Broombush just starting to bud. *Thysanotus patersonii* - Twining Fringe Lily. Plus many *Calytrix tetragona* flowering and finishing flowering. All shades of pink and red. Even when they have lost their petals the sepals are still pink. There were lots of *Callistemon rugulosus* the Scarlet Bottlebrush with new flower spikes forming, but not yet in flower.

Climbed Mt Moffatt [Ed.: all of 300m and the highest point in the Little Desert] good views. *Lepidobolus drapetocoleus* - such an amazing sounding name for the Scale Shedder with its golden scale peeling off above the base. Both *Apodasmia brownii* - Coarse Twine Rush and *Hypolaena fastigiata* - Tassel Rope-rush, interspersed with sedges.

Comesperma calymega - Blue-spike Milkwort with one blue flower opening at a time. *Isopogon ceratophyllus* - Horny Cone-bush not yet flowering and with interesting shapes. Desert Banksia - *Banksia ornata*. Hakea - none in flower - both *Hakea rostrata* and *Hakea rugosa*.

At Mt Moffatt we headed south stopping to see *Stackhousia aspericocca* type 1 - Rough-nut Stackhousia.



Eucalyptus leptophylla - Slender Mallee. *Bursaria spinosa* – Spiny Bursaria. A *Billardiera cymosa* - Sweet Appleberry twining its way in a bush. Plus there was a spent *Pyrorchis nigricans*- Red-beaks and many single leaves not flowering. Large low bushes of *Pultenaea tenuifolia* and *Pultenaea prostrata* side by side. Indistinguishable foliage - just differentiated by colour on back of petals. Red backed *P. prostrata*.



Prostanthera aspalathoides - Scarlet Mint Bush, with most flowering red, but one plant was flowering yellow. A single flowering *Thelymitra alcockiae* - Large Blue Sun Orchid with multiple flowers. *Eucalyptus costata* subsp. *murrayana* (Yellow Mallee) the eucalypt with the largest flowers in the desert. We stopped to see *Gompholobium ecostatum* the Dwarf Wedge Pea; the same species as in Grampians but here it is lemon and not orange. There



were lots of these ground covering plants with interesting habit and the buds / flowers on the ends of their spreading ground hugging branches. *Boronia coerulescens subsp. coerulescens* the Blue Boronia flowering pink. A delicate plant. Further on native pines *Calitris rhomboidea*.

Day 2

Weather cloudy and windy today. We turned north on Tallageira Track to take right (east) fork along Lillimur Dam track. More *Kunzea pomifera*, *Eucalyptus leucoxylon* and *Allocasuarina luehmannii*. Stop at Laidlaw's Dam. Small amount of water with *Myriophyllum* species. *Actinobole uliginosum* - Flannel Cudweed. Further along Laidlaw's Dam track we stopped to see *Sphaerolobium minus* - Eastern Globe Pea flowering and fruiting under the Broombush - *Melaleuca uncinata*. Hilltops covered in *Banksia ornata*. Two types of Grass Trees: *Xanthorrhoea australis* and *Xanthorrhoea caespitosa*. Further on a stop for more Blue *Boronia coerulescens* and *Gompholobium ecostatum* flowering and budding. Plus an interesting pink flowering *Leptospermum myrsinoides*, and a wolf spider in its burrow. *Pimelea octophylla* - Woolly rice flower. *Dillwynia sericea* the Showy Parrot Pea. *Dillwynia hispida* the Red Parrot Pea. *Gonocarpus tetragynus* - Common Raspwort. Ants including the curious Muscleman Tree Ant so called because their legs have little swellings that look like little muscles. Both types of Fringe Myrtle- *Calytrix tetragona* and *Calytrix alpestris*. After lunch we continued north -east stopping to see Purple Fringed Daisy Bush *Olearia ciliata*, white *Argentipallium obtusifolium* and *Argentipallium blandowskianum* the Woolly Everlasting. We also noted a tiny *Levenhookia* species, the Dwarf Wire Lily *Laxmannia orientalis* and several Flame Heath - *Stenantha conostephioides*. Plus more *Comesperma calymega*, *Hibbertia riparia* and even some *Hibbertia sericea* flowering. *Pimelea octophylla* poking its head up high through other bushes. At Jacobs track we turned south. There were lots of *Melaleuca wilsonii* - Violet Honey Myrtle flowering. Crossed a depression and entered more Yellow Gum woodland. *Melaleuca lanceolata* with *Cassytha* species twining over it. At the corner with Southern Break Track there was a patch of *Caladenia tentaculata* - the Eastern Mantis Spider Orchid.

So you see, there was more than just Shiny Tea Tree! Thank you Graham & Maree and a wonderful, enthusiastic group.



Grampians Group Calendar

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

November

Tue 21st Meeting at SNH -Speaker Ade Foster 'Frogs', followed by our AGM.

Outing: Saturday 25th, *Pimelea pagophylla* search, with Noushka

Sunday 26th Seed collection walk in Illawarra

December

Outing: Sunday 10th walk in local area - higher country "2nd spring" Mt William Mitchell Plateau

Tue 19th Xmas break up at Jocelyn & John's (see Announcements)

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

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