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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 20th FEBRUARY, 7.30pm at the Pomonal Hall
"Inland islands and leafy bridges"

Speaker:
Dr. Elia Pirtle,
Landcare Facilitator and Communications Officer, Project Platypus
*Members with surnames A-K, please bring something for supper

February Meeting

Dr. Elia Pirtle - Landcare Facilitator and Communications Officer, Project Platypus

"Inland Islands and Leafy Bridges"

Once upon a time, all manner of native critters could be seen flying, gliding and crawling from tree to tree throughout vast woodlands that connected Gariwerd all the way along the Great Dividing Range to the very northern tip of Australia, in Cape York.

But over time, the once sprawling woodlands have been replaced by farmland,

towns and roads, and today we have a mosaic of much smaller habitat 'islands' dotted throughout our landscape. Finding food, homes and mates has become increasingly difficult for many of our native species, leaving some threatened with extinction. But their story doesn't have to end here! Ecologists have many tricks up our sleeves to build habitat 'bridges' and reconnect these 'islands' to allow native species to thrive again. Elia will present a short history of the formation of habitat islands around the Gariwerd/Grampians region, as well as introduce local species that can benefit from our help.



Announcements

Sat February 24th 11.30 am,

APS Grampians group is hosting a BBQ farewell party at the Halls Gap Botanic Garden

for member Margo Sietsma who is moving to Canberra

(Note our Feb Working Bee is postponed)

From the President

Happy New year to everyone. It has been a 'kind' summer for us gardeners. I am sure you have all been busy either planting or weeding! We have done plenty of both too and are particularly pleased to have planted over 50 Banksia seedlings that we raised after purchasing the seeds from Kevin and Cathy Collins.

But firstly, a sincere thank you to John King for being such a wonderful President over the past five years. His dedication and commitment to the task definitely sets the bar high. I might have to go around, under and crawl over it at times to keep up the momentum. However, with all your support and help, I know we are in a strong position to build on our enthusiasm and knowledge and extend our reach to new members of the community who like us, wish to conserve and grow Australian plants.

Over summer, there has been activity behind the scenes. Thank you to Catherine Pye who has completed the revision of our library. It has been an underutilised resource and now with the revision it is both a significant asset on our ledger but more importantly a valuable resource for our group to access when wanting to research and learn more about our Australian plants. Catherine will present the revised library to us at the February meeting and there will be a supporting article in next newsletter. Thank you again Catherine as you have put many hours of preparation into this project.

Margot Galletly, along with secretarial duties, has spearheaded the farewell event for our dear member, Margo Sietsma who is downsizing and moving to Canberra. We have extended the invitation to other community groups that Margo has been part of and needless to say, it has been received with great support. So, pack your picnic lunch and enjoy a few hours in the Halls Gap Botanical gardens to regale the legendary impact Margo has had on the conservation of flora and fauna in the Grampians region. (event details above).

Jocelyn has also commenced planning for our annual Flower show. Our focus this year is Australian plants for food and other uses. This is a subject that has not been covered before, yet is gaining a lot of interest in the broader community. We look forward to supporting her and helping make our Pomonal Flower Show one of the best flower shows on the APS calendar.

Neil Marriott, is putting a strong speaker list together and we are off to a flying start with Elia Purtle from Project Platypus speaking on biodiversity conservation. Titled - Inland islands and leafy bridges. She is a wonderful presenter and this will be an entertaining presentation. We encourage you all to attend and bring a friend too. (see flyer above).

Welcome to two new members who have joined over summer – Liz Bacon and Kim Vipond, from Pomonal. I look forward to meeting you both.

And of course, thank you to our new newsletter editor – Wendy M. This newsletter is key to communications as all members receive a copy be it via email, mail or by hand. It is what keeps the wheels turning as we respect that not everyone can come to every gathering but we will all be kept informed.

Each month, I am unashamedly going to leave you with a line taken from “A resource kit for your home garden in Victoria”, called ‘Growing Australian’ and produced by APS Vic (2009). –. (Available to borrow from our library).

Why grow Australian plants? - *They are our OWN – they are native to this great land of Australia*

Fiona Lucas

President APS Grampians Group

My Life as a Garden Bowl

I started life as a water feature in the garden with a young lady, Chloe, her arms above her head holding a shell with water running down her arms, and she was standing in me. Some people may remember me many years ago as the base of a fountain on the stage of the old Pomonal Hall when the Grampians Group Show feature was “Water in the Garden”.

When at home Chloe was in a sheltered area but the wind kept blowing her over and eventually broke her arm, her two smaller sisters are now residing in town, Amelia sits cross-legged in the shade reading her book while Sophia lies on her tummy smelling the waterlilies or counting the fish in the garden pond.

My next life was as a fish bowl shifted from a rural setting to life in town and placed on the veranda in my new home; but this was not very successful as the water would turn green even with a good fountain oxygenating plants and fish. The fish had a poor environment in which to live even with constant cleaning, scrubbing, and algaecide tablets, nothing would keep the water clear.

Nearby was a small herbaceous plant that had outgrown its self-watering pot and was in need of a larger home. After a discussion it was decided to repurpose me into a new life as a “wicking bed”. So we went to a native plant nursery to look for plants whose label read “Moist Well-drained position”. With some plants selected, home we went to make my conversion, firstly transferring the fish and plants to the larger garden pond, scrubbing my inside to get rid of any trace of algae, and selecting a new position in the garden which would suit the growing conditions of all the plants. A small patch under a crepe myrtle was levelled out and I was placed to get morning sun, but protected from hot afternoon sun, and winter sun would shine through.

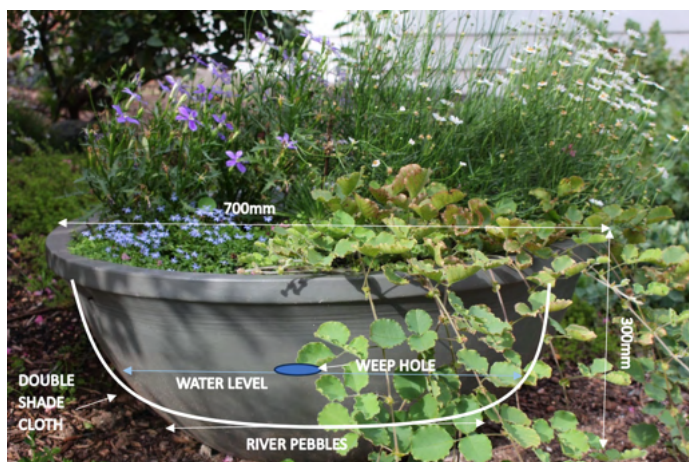
River pebbles were placed on my bottom, then a double layer of shade cloth and the rest filled with native potting mix. I received a weep-hole so I did not hold too much water, and all the plants were placed into their new home. The *Brachyscome paludicola* was transplanted from its self-watering pot, the new plants were placed to try to be pleasing on the eye, and the *Kennedia prostrata* selected to trail down over the

side of the bowl and have it blend into its surroundings better. One of the new plants was *Laurentia* 'Glowing Purple'. I do look pretty good now, I hope you like my photo.

So far all is going to plan.

Upon doing an internet search it seems that in the UK & US the names have been changed slightly from the "Pop N Fizz" to "Fizz N Pop" with many more flower colours than available in Victoria, there is one nursery in WA that has a pink flowered variety of *Isotoma* / *Laurentia* *Axillaris*, so has some *Isotomes* been reclassified to *Laurentia* ??? [Ed. They appear to be synonyms. I found *Laurentia* was formerly the common name], Many years ago, we bought a punnet of 12 seedlings marked *Isotoma* X *Laurentia*, put them as a garden edge in totally the wrong place, but they self-seeded for the for the next couple of years but got fewer in number each year.

Article and photos Kevin Moulinox



End of Year Christmas Party

December was the group's end of year party. We were invited to John and Jocelyn King's beautiful new straw-bale home, nestled into the hillside right at the foot of Redman Bluff. Unfortunately it was a rather cold and windy evening, so inside was very welcoming, even though there were at least 34 of us. The views through the large double glazed windows are dramatic.

Members all brought a delightful range of foods to share, and the kitchen and sumptuous pantry were praised and envied by all. Soon we were enjoying a really wonderful and varied dinner. Over dinner it was terrific to catch up socially, members needed nothing more until the eagerly anticipated Grand Christmas Raffle was underway. As predicted a huge range of beautiful plants including a number of other products were won by all. It was agreed that all the money go to charity. This year's raffle will go to help out with the running of the Halls Gap Botanic Gardens.

After a beautiful dessert everyone was treated to a few words from our new President Fiona Lucas, thanking our wonderful hosts and outlining her hopes and excitement over the coming year. Members went home with one or two lovely raffle plants for their garden – including, lucky as always, Beverly Grace went home with enough for a whole new garden!! Ed

News from Panrock Ridge

After our wettest year on record for 2022 followed by good rains in the winter of 2023, we were suddenly plunged into the big dry again, with virtually no rains at all for the entire spring. But, in early December back came the rains which continued right up to mid January 2024! As a result the growth for most of our garden and our Grevilleas has been wonderful, although a lot of our plants were severely defoliated by Grevillea Leaf-miner during winter-spring (see article below). Most young plants are now coming on strongly although a few northern Australian species grafted onto *Grevillea robusta* succumbed during the cold wet winter months, despite the fact that we get very few frosts. I feel the cold and wet, overcast conditions are just as damaging as frosts for tropical species, having evolved to require high UV levels throughout the year.

All Grevillea species and subspecies in our garden are now permanently labelled with beautiful engraved aluminium labels thanks to fellow member of the Grevillea study Group John O'Hara. Our garden holds the official living collection of Grevillea with the ANPSA Grevillea Study Group, and is the official Plants Trust Australia Grevillea collection. Since the installation of the permanent labels, good friend and natural history artist Sas from Red Banksia Gallery in Sassafras has GPS'd every Grevillea and entered them on a spreadsheet. He has then transferred this spreadsheet into Google Earth, so visitors can download the spreadsheet and zoom in to our garden to be able to easily find any Grevillea species and subspecies in our collection –around 350!! Sas has also attached an internet link to every Grevillea so visitors can learn about each Grevillea they are looking at in the flesh! I should mention that Sas is an absolute computer guru, making this impossible task look easy!! And you should see his gallery!! Amazing!!

With the above average rains, most plants in the garden have flowered superbly –some have even



re-flowered for a second time with the summer rains. Our *Grevillea annulifera* plants were covered in flower and we are now hoping for a good seed set! If any members are interested in seed of this very rare species under cultivation feel free to speak to me. Likewise, if there are any species you want grafting or cutting material from please let me know. If you come to our Easter working bee you can help yourself!! As well as many of the grevilleas flowering for the second time this summer, others are totally covered in massed flowering like we have never seen before. For example our *Grevillea batrachioides*, a critically endangered species from the slopes of Mt Leseuer near the West coast of WA, is currently covered in spectacular large orange and pink heads of flowers. It is already setting large amounts of seed. pic. ***Grevillea batrachioides* Mt Leseuer *Grevillea* heavy in flower**

A Few other Highlights

Grevillea spinosa, donated as a lovely grafted plant from Mt Annan Botanic Gardens has grown strongly and flowered beautifully over the warm summer months. It is now setting large quantities of seed which I have been busy harvesting. Growing beside the *G spinosa* plant we have flowering specimens of *G bipinnatifida* –large flowered Chittering Valley form and *G batrachioides*. It will be interesting to see if there is any hybridisation between these species when I germinate the *G spinosa* seed.

A feature of *G spinosa* that really surprised me was the very small size of the fruiting follicles. This can be seen in the photo. Most *Grevillea* species in this section of the genus have relatively large follicles. Species such as *G eriostachya*, *G juncifolia* and *G excelsior* for example have follicles two to three times larger than those of *G spinosa*! Of interest also was the very high pollination rates for the species as can be seen in the photo below –this confluence had 19 fully developed follicles!! In contrast most other species often only produce two or three follicles per confluence at best.

***Grevillea spinosa* showing the tiny follicles and the high pollination rate**



Serious Threat to Southern Grevilleas

Grevillea leaf showing severe damage to lower surface of leaf due to Grevillea Leaf-miner

In recent correspondence with officers from Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne and several other entomologist experts, there is concern that the rare and endangered Mt Cole Grevillea *Grevillea montis cole* may be under threat from Grevillea Leaf-miner *Peraglyphis atimana*. This small brown moth originated in Silky Oak *Grevillea robusta* forests of northern NSW and SE

Queensland. Sadly it was inadvertently brought in to Victoria many years ago when large retail nurseries bought Grevilleas grown in Queensland down into the southern states for sale to the public. Here it has slowly and steadily spread into natural stands of nearly all wild Grevilleas, and with the combined effects of climate change, it is having a dramatic effect on a large number of species.

At Mt Cole, many plants have been completely skeletonised, and I have seen the same thing in populations of *Grevillea floripendula* in the forests north of Beaufort. The worst affected colonies of this

species now no longer exist, having been completely wiped out by this insidious pest! Likewise here in the Grampians, many populations of *Grevillea aquifolium* in particular are annually impacted by this new pest. A recent survey of *Grevillea microstegia* with Cranbourne Botanic Gardens revealed that this rare and localised species from on and around Mt Cassell behind Pomonal is also being badly impacted by the pest.

In the home garden it can be controlled annually by spraying all your grevilleas in early autumn with a systemic insecticide, but this is drastic and I am reluctant to do this. Unfortunately this means that each year I am losing a number of smaller and weaker *Grevillea* specimens from our gardens. Regular spraying with pest oil, trying to ensure you get the spray on the lower surfaces of the leaves is also beneficial and not as toxic to you and the environment as insecticides.

Annual Grevillea Study Group Working Bee and Get Together Friday 29th March – Tuesday 2nd April

Our garden is on show with APS groups coming to visit in the ANPSA Pre- and Post- Conference Tours in September and October, so needs a lot of help to make it sparkle! Please feel welcome to come along for any day or all of Easter to help us –after the big rains of summer the weeds have gone mad and many plants need a good pruning. Please name any tools you bring and join our get-together. We don't just work, we also have a few visits to the Grampians to see the WAMA Botanic Garden, Phil Vaughan's Nursery etc. Contact Neil if you can come. Meals will be provided and maybe bring something to share.

Book Review

Fiona Lucas on A resource kit for your home garden in Victoria – Published by APS Vic, 2009

This resource kit is ideal for someone starting or renovating an Australian plant garden in Victoria. It commences with a solid list of reasons as to why grow Australian plants, but more importantly includes hands on advice.

The first section, 'Know your space' identifies the natural elements of your space that need consideration such as neighbouring trees, buildings, slope of land and soil types. The following section, 'Concepts and design', helps us tackle the landscaping of your space and brings your attention to the design function of your plant. I appreciated that it does not assume you are starting from a blank canvas but respects you may need to blend an Australian garden into an existing garden.

Many resources will leave you there in that lovely dreamy grand design stage but not our practical mentors at APS Vic. This resource includes step by step guidelines on 'how to plant', what plants suit the Grampians region, how to grow your own plants by seed, cutting or division and even tips on how to get children involved.

I want to buy this resource kit but alas it is not for sale. These busy volunteers provided one kit to each Vic group. Unsophisticated presentation it maybe but it is high in relevant and practical information that I highly recommend to anyone starting an Australian plant garden.

This resource kit is available to loan from our APS GG library that has recently been relaunched.

APS GG Library Feb 2024

APS Grampians Group Calendar 2024

Monthly meetings on the 3rd Tuesday 7.30pm, June/July the 3rd Saturday 2pm.

Even months at PH (Pomonal Hall, Ararat-Halls Gap Rd) Odd months except Jan and July at SNH (Stawell Neighbourhood House, 42 Sloane Street Stawell).

Outings and activities are subject to change; e.g. walks will be arranged with an eye to the weather

February Tue 20th Meeting 7.30pm: PH, Speaker Elia Pirtle,

Sat 24th 11.30 am, Halls Gap Botanic Garden

You are invited to a BBQ to farewell Margo Sietsma. She is moving to Canberra

Lets celebrate Margo's magnificent contribution to the community and farewell our dear member

March Tue 19th Meeting 7.30pm: SNH, Speaker to be confirmed

April Tue 16th Meeting 7.30pm: PH, Royce Raleigh- Growing Hakeas in his Grampians garden

May Tue 21st Meeting 7.30pm: SNH, Speaker: Miriam Ford Mintbushes

June Sat 15th Meeting 2pm: PH, Speaker to be confirmed

July Sat 20th Meeting 2pm:SNH, Speaker to be confirmed

Sat 20th Working Bee

August Tue 20th Meeting 7.30pm: PH, Speaker to be confirmed

September Sat, 7th Sun 8th Outing: Currency Creek Arboretum

Tue 17th Meeting 7.30pm: SNH, Show planning

Sat 21st Sun 22nd Event: 40th Pomonal Flower Show

October Tue 15th Meeting 7.30pm: PH, Speaker to be confirmed

November Tue 19th Meeting 7.30pm: SNH, Speaker to be confirmed

December Tue 17th Meeting 7.30pm: Christmas breakup

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

GARIWoRD The Australian Plants Society Grampians District Group newsletter

Thank you to all those who contributed to this edition

You are encouraged to contribute to future editions of GARIWoRD,
be it photos, articles, questions, suggestions or whatever; send to
grampiansnewsletter@apsvic.org.au

APS Grampians Group Committee

President: Fiona Lucas

Vice President: Neil Marriott

Secretary: [Margot Galletly](#)

Treasurer: John King

Memberships: John King

Hall Committee Representative: Lisa Ashdowne

Flower-show coordinator: [Jocelyn King](#)

Neil Macumber

Newsletter Editor: [Wendy Marriott](#)

Ross Simpson