




Web: <https://apsvic.org.au/aps-grampians/>

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NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 19th MARCH, 7.30pm at the Stawell Neighbourhood House
Speaker: Dr. Elia Pirtle, Landcare Facilitator and Communications Officer, Project Platypus: "Inland Islands and Leafy Bridges"

(Members with surnames L-Z, please bring something for supper)

March Speaker

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. In this landscape, fire was a regular, and necessary part of maintaining the health of habitat. But over time, the once sprawling woodlands have been replaced by farmland, towns and roads, and today we have a mosaic of much smaller habitat 'islands' dotted throughout our landscape. As a result, finding food, homes and mates has become increasingly difficult for many of our native species, leaving some threatened with extinction. Even fire's renewing effects can now create stress by impacting already isolated habitat islands, with pest animals and weeds and habitat fragmentation throwing off the natural recovery process after fire. But the story of our native species 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, what this means for already pressured species after bushfire, and introduce local species that can benefit from our help.

From the President

I believe it was the very day our chirpy / good news February newsletter was distributed that the devastating fires in Pomonal and Dadswell Bridge occurred. Tragically impacting our members and broader community, it was our members in Wildflower Drive that have been affected the most, by way of losing both their home and garden. Phil, Lisa, Daryl, & Karen our hearts go out to you. Then there are too many other members to mention who were either fighting the fires, saving their own home, lost their garden, had to evacuate or were in high alert zones. The impact has been immense but Pomonal / Dadswell bridge communities and our members are a strong lot. The next day, many of us, if not all, turned around and helped those in need, either informally or formally. Close to 90+% of our members were affected that day, 13th February, 2024. We thank the C.F.A for saving our meeting hall and other community facilities and homes to ensure the community has a hub to gather, plan, execute and gain strength from each other. For those of us that are able, let's sprout some extra seeds, propagate your favourite plants and find some spare gardening equipment to help our members who lost their gardens, grow again. We could start with ordering seeds from APS Vic each quarter.

On a lighter note:

- thank you to Margot Galletly for organising such a wonderful farewell to our special friend and member Margo Seitsma,

- Jocelyn King continued to field emails regarding the Pomonal Flower show. Many colleagues from other groups were concerned for us that it may not go ahead. But yes, it is! Our show will always be a native flower show and will always relate to conserving Australian plants. This year's focus is "Edible Australian Plants". Jocelyn has secured a high profile key note speaker - Clarence Slockee from ABC Gardening Australia. -

- I hope many of you can make it to our members' get-together on Tuesday 19th March @ 7.30pm at the Stawell Neighbourhood House. Our speaker is Elia Pirtle, community liaison from Project Platypus. Elia is speaking on the biodiversity corridor but will also include reference to how fire plays with the pressures already facing fragmented habitats and what natural fire recovery may look like. Please invite a friend.

"Why grow Australian plants? - They are beautiful and varied."

From 'Growing Australian' – a resource kit for growing home gardens in Victoria. Written by APS Vic. 2009

Please contact me with any ideas or comments you have for our group.

Fiona Lucas, President, APS Grampians Group Ph: 0418366362 email: fionarlucas@gmail.com

Announcements from John King

The quarterly APSV magazine will arrive soon, and with it the chance for members to order a further 6 packets of seeds (APSV benefits below). I would like to encourage members to order seeds and grow plants at home, for fire-affected Pomonal gardens, whether or not owned by our members. Neil Marriott and Fiona Lucas have offered to donate tubes and your committee has approved the group funds the cost of some seed-raising & potting mix and labels & tube trays requested by members for this purpose.

Tuesday 13th February

Tuesday the 13th of February 2024 - from John King

As for previous events, everyone will have a different perspective of the bushfire that swept through Pomonal on the 13th of February; this is my experience.

Late morning the sky went very dark and I saw lightning to the northwest, which was followed by an intense 6.5mm downpour at our place. Jocelyn returned from Pomonal to say that they had only had a



few drops. About 12:30 I received a call from a friend nearer Halls Gap, asking if I could see the plume of smoke coming from the vicinity of Lake Bellfield. I could not. He gave progress reports and sent a photo of planes dropping fire retardant. The northerly wind got up and the fire couldn't be contained as it tracked between Lake Bellfield and the steep western cliffs of the Mt William Range. At about 2:30pm I could see the smoke above Mt Cassell, and by 4:40pm, flames on the eastern slopes of that peak. I stayed to defend our property until there was a definite wind change from the

west, at which point I headed into town to join the Pomonal CFA brigade. There was fire on either side of the sealed road in, and fallen trees across the path.

There were many trucks on the oval representing strike teams from across western Victoria from as far away as Port Fairy. The Pomonal trucks were out and so I jumped aboard a Moyston truck and we headed out to Waterhole Rd and Emu Cr to protect assets. The ensuing days were spent spotting smoke and extinguishing burning stumps and then using thermal imaging cameras to detect hot spots. We reassured and assisted returning residents. There was apprehension at the return of catastrophic conditions, but all the services did a fantastic job and the fire was contained.



I have many lasting impressions of the event, the way nothing can stop a fire with fuel and galeforce winds behind it; the way firefighting teams from near and far came to help, followed by every emergency service imaginable and peer support and counsellors; the way CFA members worked together and supported one another and turned up day after day; the overwhelming generosity of the Macaffers offering food & drink on the house at Barneys first for the community, then for fires; the way the Resilience Committee kicked in and were soon organising alternative accommodation, vouchers and the like and the Relief Hub; the offers of assistance from far and wide & Col Macaffer's goFundMe page & Moyston's fund-raising auction. Then there was the feeling of utter sadness at the devastation that firestorm left behind; and of course shaking my head at the improbability of it all: for the lightning to strike exactly where it did, for the wind to make it bear down the range and then shift westerly just when it was aligned with Pomonal.

My heart goes out to all who lost their homes and possessions and memorabilia collected over a lifetime.



One week after the fire, with no rain in the meantime, the charcoal stumps of the grasstrees began to shoot, followed by other species.

From John King

Photo. Stuart Thorpe,
Three weeks after the fire, Mt Cassell in the background.

Post-Fire pics from Lisa



Excited about regeneration, Lisa Ashdowne is watering, photographing and recording. She says she collected some seeds from ground-spreading banksias that spontaneously release their seed after fire. And there may be other seeds if anyone wants to wander. There are happily lots more green shoots already and " my Microlaena (Weeping Grass) is coming back - it's fireproof!!!"

Last Meeting

Our February evening meeting was cancelled.

Lunch get-together Sat February 24th 11.30 am, Halls Gap Botanic Garden

As many of you already know, Margo Seitsma is leaving the Halls Gap community to retire with family in Canberra. As a way of saying goodbye, good luck and a huge thankyou for all she has done in the community, APS Grampians hosted a picnic BBQ in the HG Botanic Gardens.

In Light of the devastating impacts of the recent fires in the area it was wonderful to see so many people at the event. There were representatives from APS Grampians, FOGG, WAMA, Parks Victoria, the HG Community Association, and many others. Some people who previously had association with Margo returned to Halls Gap especially for the day.

Our own Neil Marriott was MC and after an initial welcome, and lunch, spoke highly of Margo, presenting her with a gift to remember us by. He then introduced other speakers including Glenda Lewin from WAMA, Tammy Shoo from Parks Vic, Rodney Thompson of Friends of Grampians Gariwerd, and David Witham from The HG Community Association and Halls Gap Botanic Garden. All spoke in glowing terms of Margo's involvement with many sectors within the community including her role as educator, from Judy Hilbig, Halls Gap Primary School, and as a passionate supporter of the environment, Margo was dedicated to the HG botanic gardens, which has been improved and maintained under her hard work and guidance for many years.

This was followed by the presentation of a rather large cake which was cut by Margo and given to all.

Preparation of the site was largely down to Warren Ross who tidied and cleaned the area and made sure all was in order before the event. Many thanks Warren, and to Paul Turner for being BBQ guru on the day.

We all wish Margo the best in her new but perhaps quieter adventure, and know she will bring great knowledge and energy to everything she chooses to be involved with.

Margot G



Autumn Banksias at Panrock Ridge

After the horrific times in the last month here's something to cheer ourselves up; what better than the beautiful flowers of some of our amazing Banksias. Following the very heavy rains we all experienced in December and January, there were good moisture levels in the soil, ideal for the formation of good flower buds. By February and early March most of our autumn flowering Banksias are now a mass of flowers. Here are some of the highlights...

***Banksia rosserae* Celia's Banksia**

This is the only Banksia in the entire genus that occurs in the arid zone in outback Australia, a region that gets less than 200mm rain a year! Following the discovery of a new Grevillea species on an area of crown land adjoining Kirkalocka Station, Peter Olde and I decided we should head out there in 2001 to investigate. After a long trip almost to Mt Magnet, we arrived at Kirkalocka and headed into the vast sandplains to try and find the new Grevillea. This we soon did, but we also found a strange Banksia that the owners of Kirkalocka had told us about. Being so far inland, this Banksia only flowers following rains that have pushed way into the interior. Sadly this had not happened when we found it, however there were enough specimens of the old flowers, fruits and foliage to know that it was a new, yet to be described species. Specimens were taken and on our return, Wendy and I visited Celia Rosser and gave her a branch with old flowers and foliage and a mature seed cone for her to start painting.



Photo ***Banksia rosserae* Celia's Banksia**

Initially we had decided to call it *Banksia kirkalocka*, but following an invitation from Celia Rosser to her amazing exhibition at the Victoria State Library in Melbourne we changed our minds. Sitting down for dinner after the exhibition, Peter Olde, Wendy and I all agreed that the new Banksia should honour Celia Rosser who has been rated as one of the world's

greatest botanical artists.

Photo **Young *Banksia rosserae* in full flower**

She has painted every single species and subspecies of Banksia, and her work has twice been gifted to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth by the Australian Government, yet she remained unrecognised botanically! Time to put an end to that!!

Then in 2006 Cyclone Glenda dumped a year's rain over inland WA, stimulating the new Banksia to flower for the first time in many years! Celia headed off to the West, travelling inland to see this



Banksia in its natural habitat. A few months later, at a

special function at Trevor and Beryl Blake's property in eastern Melbourne, I handed Celia, who had no knowledge of this, a copy of our scientific paper naming the *Banksia*! She was absolutely overwhelmed and lost for words, but it was so wonderful to celebrate this occasion with her and her friends because of her surprise when she first read the words *Banksia rosserae*!! Today, following the big rains we had in December and January, *Banksia rosserae* is flowering heavily in our *Banksia* patch. It is a most beautiful plant with its spherical, nodding flowers that begin as lovely bright green buds that gradually turn yellow with maturity. The wonderful thing is that the flowers are terminal, making it a possible cut flower for cultivation in dry inland climates that are well drained and sunny.

Banksia ornata Desert Banksia

Despite the common name, Desert Banksia does not actually occur in the arid zone of inland Australia, but in dry sandy sites in sub-coastal Victoria and South Australia. It is in fact normally yellow and quite common in such sites in our Grampians as well as the Little Desert. Our plants were gifts from Phil and Jane Williams and are the unusual tan-flowered form that originated along the Dukes Highway in SA. They have proven to be the hardiest and showiest form of this species that we have ever grown, and display their beautiful tan flowers prominently every year.



Photo **B ornata Tan flowered form**



We also grow lots of lovely *Banksia baxteri*, *Banksia prionotes* and *Banksia speciosa* that we have been picking for Fiona's floristry business, as well as for our cottage and ourselves. We would have picked hundreds of flowers from our *B baxteri* this summer –it just goes to show how our gardens would look if we had good reliable rains every year! Oh, if only!!

Photo **A few of our Banksias picked for Fiona**

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! We invite members to come along during 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 in. We don't just work, we also try to enjoy the garden, visit the Grampians, the WAMA Botanic Garden, Phil Vaughan's Nursery etc.

Please Contact Neil if you can come. Meals will be provided but maybe bring something to share.

APS Victoria News

Information for members and overview of the APS VICTORIA INC. quarterly COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT MEETING via zoom Saturday 10 February 2024 at 10.00am

ANPSA 2024 (30th Sept – 4th Oct) Check the link on the APS Vic website for details. You are encouraged to attend and there is a call for volunteers to coordinate and run the raffle.

Web administrator John King has emphasised the importance of new members and existing members renewing membership via the online club pages. If groups need assistance he is happy to walk through the process with you.

Membership Officer Marj Seaton urged members to follow the online procedures of members entering their details online together with payment in full sent to APS Vic. For those members who have difficulty doing this, club treasurers/officers are requested to provide assistance to their members.

Update of club rules. Some minor tweaking is required to have our rules fully comply with updated requirements of Consumer Affairs Victoria. Are there any interested persons in our club who might be willing to work on this as part of a sub-committee? Most district groups are similarly affected.

Idea from Maree Goods of Wimmera Growers At their first meeting they set up 5 propagating stands covering seeds, cuttings, division, growing native orchids and grafting. The response to this was tremendous. Maree Goods' article about 'Growing Your Group' is in the next issue of Growing Australian.

Neil Marriott is concerned that what is happening in The Briars with the Harry Potter Experience is also happening in other parks and reserves across the state, including the Grampians National Park where thousands of runners recently participated in a Peaks Trail race without consideration of Phytophthora sanitisation. We need to stand up with the 20k who signed the Briars petition.

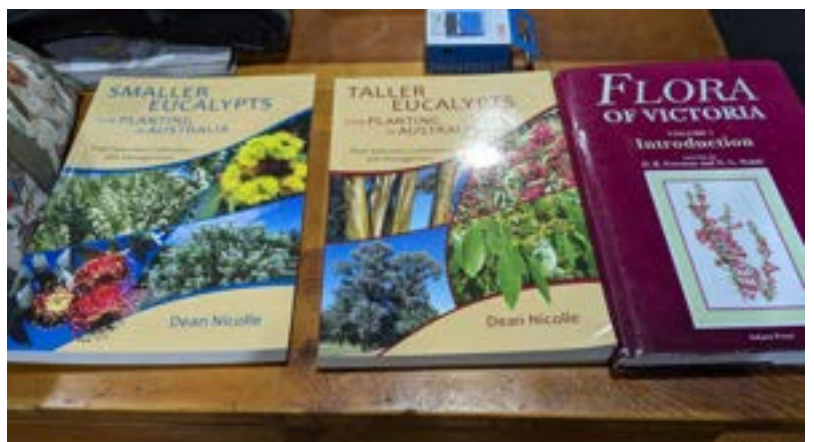
It has been requested that Neil draft a letter.

Seedbank Curator. All current members are entitled to six packets of seed from the extensive list of available species, upon receipt of each quarterly magazine. Full instructions are on the seed list: Write down a list of your six preferred species and then also include a further list of alternatives in case one or more species has run out. Place both the list and a stamped self-addressed envelope in an envelope marked to **APS Victoria Seed Bank, c/- Marj Seaton, 36 Voumard Street, Oakleigh South, Vic 3167**

Since our November meeting we've had only 12 requests,(68 packets) and one donation has been received. Marj intends ordering new and replacement stock at the end of March

Library Spot

New titles added to APS Grampians Library



APS Grampians Group Calendar 2024

We meet monthly on the 3rd Tuesday 7.30pm, except 3rd Saturday 2pm in June & July, recess Jan
Even months at PH (Pomonal Hall, Ararat-Halls Gap Rd) or a member's garden.
Odd months at SNH (Stawell Neighbourhood House, 42 Sloane Street Stawell) or a member's garden.
Outings/activities communicated in this newsletter; subject to change - eg with an eye on the weather

February Tue 20th Meeting 7.30pm: PH, cancelled.

March Tue 19th Meeting 7.30pm: SNH, Speaker Elia Pirtle

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

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

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

July Sat 20th Meeting 2pm:SNH, Speaker Alan Bedggood Grasses and pressing specimens

Also in July, at Noon Working Bee before meeting

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

APSVictoria Committee of Management quarterly meetings

- 11 May 2024 hosted by APS Mornington. Fenton Square a.m. with Seaford Banksia Arboretum p.m..
 - 27th and 28th July 2024 full quarterly weekend hosted by APS Bendigo
 - Tentatively 23rd and 24th November 2024, including AGM, hosted by APS Wangaratta.
- Gardens for Life 32nd ANPSA 2024 National Biennial Conference hosted by APS Victoria
September 30th to October 4th 2024 at The Round, Nunawading.
- 15th FJC Rogers Seminar 2025 on Epacridaceae hosted by APS Mornington Peninsula
- South Australia Biennial conference to be held in Alice Springs in 2026

[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