

Australian Plant Society (Victoria)



Keilor Plains Group

Meetings

First Friday of the month (not January) at
7.50pm

Meetings and trips cancelled until further notice

WINTER 2020

NUMBER 135

- August 7 ASKP meeting to be confirmed**
- September 3 ASKP meeting to be confirmed**
- September 14 ASKP spring trip Langwarrin / Frankston**
- October 2 ASKP meeting Plant table**
- October 9-11 ASKP Spring trip Wilsons Prom**
- October 24/25 FJC Rogers seminar**
- November 6 ASKP meeting to be confirmed**
- November 14 ASKP trip to be confirmed**
- November 21 ASKP hosts Vic APS meeting**
- December 4 ASKP meeting Christmas breakup**

Thanks to all those who organize our monthly meetings and bi-monthly excursions as well as our annual spring trip away.

The sub-committees that co-ordinate the speakers and trips are always happy to receive recommendations for places to visit and subjects for talks – especially if you're willing to step up and help!

Contact Jason Caruso, Neil Duncan or one of the other committee members (see back page for details)

From the Editor – Neil Duncan

Welcome to the winter edition of the Keilor Plains APS newsletter. Unfortunately it has not been the autumn we would have liked from a social viewpoint although the rains we had were very welcome for our parched gardens. Many of you no doubt spent lots of time in the garden during lockdown and for some it may be that you have to spend more time in lockdown with the latest restrictions. I put in a sand bed for the mainly WA plants that need the better drainage but I only had room for about a third of the plants that needed to be planted! As winter progresses many of our native plants start to come into bloom and the cheery blossoms of the wattles lift our spirits as we await the riot of colour of the spring flowering plants.

Don't forget to register for the FJ C Rogers seminar (Mints and allied genera) on 24th and 25th October although the lectures will be delivered online and the two days will be devoted to garden visits.
Stay safe and happy gardening.

Membership Renewals 2020-21:

It's membership time again, and you will have received your renewal notice emailed by Doug recently. This is just a reminder that membership is due from 1st July, which keeps the payment in the year it falls due. Our preference is for members to use the Membership page on our website to complete the form online

<https://www.apskeilorplains.org.au/membership.html> , and remit fees by EFT to the bank account provided on the form. Alternatively, you may wish to print the membership form attached to Doug's email, and email to Doug, or post to Treasurer, APS-KP, PO Box 115, Niddrie 3042, together with your payment. Please email Doug on dougdown@tpg.com.au if you have any questions.

We're certainly looking forward to see you again, when we are able to resume normal club activities.

Best wishes to you all,
Doug Down, Membership Officer
Lauren Eagle, Treasurer

Two beauties from Lauren's garden



Correa reflexa var speciosa



Hibbertia scandens

A Story Worth Telling – Trevor Blake

This story needs telling.

So we're in lockdown. And my nature-strip was bursting with daisies from APS seed packet. People were actually photographing it, so I collected seed, enough to cover a city block. In fact the 2 big seed trays I planted erupted, I even contemplated whipper snipper treatment. What to do, no way could I toss them, so potting them on was a must. We are probably looking at many hundreds of everlasting *Bracteantha bracteata*. An SOS for tubes from friends produced a good start and so the potting began. But what to do with them? Neighbours! I circulated a note to our street where there were gardens with people who obviously liked gardening and especially those with native gardens. In my wanders around the streets there were quite a few growing Australian plants. The response was great and we have met some great people - if they politely asked for ten they received 15+ The tubes have been returned and constantly repotted. We have spread hundreds around and people have taken them for friends and relatives. I had just finished potting up the last of the crop so I still have 2-300. Our nature-strip had quite a few and I didn't collect all the seed with the result they have germinated in this pretty wet season and as well as the *Bracteantha* germinating *Rhodanthe rosea* and *anthemoides* are well on their way. There is almost no place for weeds as daisies are dominating. I am going to let them go and see what happens. There will be a lot of eyes watching. What a fun time this lockdown has been. If there are people in our group who would like some freebies give us a call 98704379 or mob. 0428284779



Nature Strip



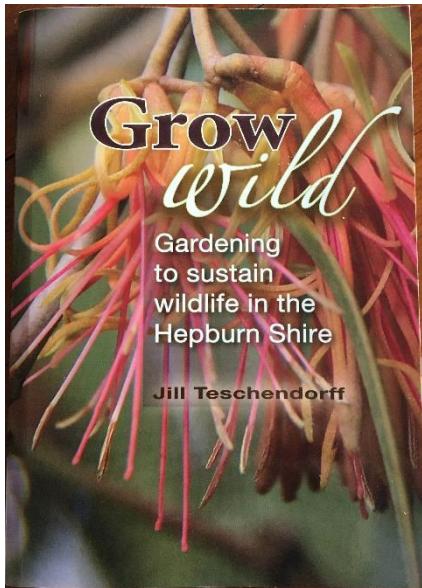
Seedlings ready to go

Grow Wild: Gardening to sustain wildlife in the Hepburn Shire

By Jill Teschendorff

Reviewed by Jane Canaway

When Jill Teschendorff and John Cable bought their 24-hectare block in Glenlyon 20 years ago, there wasn't much of a garden and it was almost impossible to reach the frontage to the Loddon River through the thickets of blackberry, gorse, phalaris, willows and other weeds.



They set about fixing both problems immediately with a hectare of landscaped garden around the house, and the rest dedicated to indigenous plants. But, as Jill chatted to neighbours about revegetating the land, she realised there were gaps in people's knowledge of local plants and how they provide habitat and food for native animals. Jill has been mentally planning *Grow Wild* for 20 years but, when she secured funding from the Hepburn Shire Council and Wombat Forestcare, the project became a reality.

The book was due for launch in March, just as Australia went into Covid-lockdown, but despite the anticlimax it has already sold more than 400 copies.

And no wonder.

It's a slim volume of just 71 pages but it's packed with information on why biodiversity is important, how

gardens can help support it – including basics such as design, soil preparation, weed control and maintenance – plus a well-illustrated section on recommended indigenous plants, then a solid list of resources: where to buy local plants, organisations of interest, references and further reading.

My only criticism is that the Australian Plants Society is not listed among the organisations! A sad omission as Jill has accompanied the Keilor Plains group on several outings and weekend trips, alongside her sister, member Bronwyn Love.

However, a number of members supplied photos for the book, via Natureshare.

While the book is aimed at the Hepburn Shire area, and at those on larger blocks than are usually found in the suburbs, the range of plant species is very similar to the Keilor Plains and the sections on design, creating habitat, and the importance of providing water is relevant to all gardeners.

TITLE: Grow Wild

PUBLISHER: Wombat Forestcare

COST: \$15 plus postage

AVAILABLE: Paradise Bookshop, Daylesford; Trentham Post Office or mail order

ORDER: it.bee@bigpond.com



Backhousia citriodora - How Good Is The Lemon Myrtle?

Backhousia citriodora named after James Backhouse an English botanist, is a bushy small tree from the rainforests of coastal Queensland. Despite this it grows quite successfully in Melbourne in a sunny position protected from strong winds. It grows well in a large



container as Hellena Lozanovski proves with this terrific specimen. In Melbourne it will only grow 3-4m tall and 2m wide with large leaves and has masses of creamy white flowers any time from late spring to autumn. New growth is an attractive reddish colour. Although it comes from a subtropical rainforest it is remarkably able to survive dry summers although the foliage will look a bit forlorn. It can also be quite successful as an indoor plant if given plenty of sunshine.

Backhousia citriodora is not just grown for its looks – it is also grown as a bush food and has been known as the ‘Queen of lemon herbs’. It has the highest purity of the chemical citral of any known plant, which gives it the lemon fragrance.

Probably the best way to use the plant is to dry the leaves which can then be either used whole or in flakes. The whole leaves can be used in baked fish while the flakes can be used in teas, biscuits, sauces, ice creams and dips to name just of few of its uses.

Essential oils can be extracted from the leaves which have medicinal properties thanks to its high anti-fungal and anti-microbial properties. Pure oil concentrate can be toxic so it is usually diluted to 1 – 10% before use.

The oil is also useful as a cleaning product and surface disinfectant as well being used in soaps, skin lotions and shampoos.

So any home can have one of these plants whether inside, in the courtyard in a container or in the garden, and enjoy the refreshing fragrance of the Lemon Myrtle.

One of the best Eremophilas - E. glandulifera ...John Upsher

What would I be looking for in choosing a favourite Eremophila? A few main characteristics immediately come to mind, dense, compact, leafy, frost- and drought- tough, attractive with well displayed colourful flowers for months on end. E glandulifera ticks all those boxes. It prefers an open sunny, well-drained position but will put up with less.

It commonly grows to about 1m tall and about as wide. The flowers range from pale to vivid pink and the leaves are silvery grey. It is larger and more robust than E. punicea and is

distinguished from that by having much larger flowers that have some glandular hairs, appearing mainly in winter and spring but there is some blossom throughout the year. Additionally it suits the smaller garden in being so easy to contain, responding well to structural or just tip pruning.

Brown and Buirchell describe it as "one of the most attractive species found in WA and in good seasons produces massed displays of beautiful pink flowers". Boschen, Goods and Wait are similarly enthusiastic, declaring it to be "a very striking shrub and can attract a lot of attention in the garden. As it becomes better known, it will be in big demand".

Doesn't that just add up to a top-rating shrub?



Did Anyone else get 2 flowering sets of seeds for the price of none?

Last year for the great seed plant out I planted a bowl with the seeds and later in spring they flowered – *Rhodanthe chlorocephala rosea*.



of *Xerochrysum bracteatum* – Strawflowers! I left them till summer when they flowered beautifully giving me two lots of flowering plants from the one seed packet.

I was very pleased with the result and let them go to seed so it could be collected. However when I was collecting the seed I noticed a whole set of weeds growing underneath. I didn't recognise the leaves so left them to see what weed they would be. Lo and behold they were not weeds but plants



Pam Brooks forgot to sow her seed and thought it was dead when she sowed it and this is the result – a beautiful pot of flowers.



Pam's pot of *Rhodanthe chlorocephala rosea*

A Wild Nature Strip in Thornbury – Chris Clarke

A Wild (messy) Thornbury Garden and Nature Strip

Visitors to the Schroeder/Clarke garden six years ago may remember the front being a sea of mulch with lots of new plants and no front fence. We still have no front fence and we prefer it that way and the plants have thrived. Well – if they died I replaced them with at least three more! We meet the neighbours and I often find strangers stopped to check out the garden now extending across the whole nature strip.

The council constructed a slow-down point right on our strip so it is extra wide. Plants close to the road are less than 1 metre tall for visibility but those in the middle provide great habitat. A four metre tall grafted Grevillea insignis has Eastern Spinebills most winter days and the Acacia glaucoptera (small leaved form) and Eremophila nivea stand out



Correa Jetty Red

We have shallow clay over sedimentary rock and a large *Corymbia citriodora* sucks out plenty of water. I've seen several people stop to hug this tree over the years and it's a lovely talking point – colour co-ordinated with the house. I've added gypsum, extra sand and soil as well as repeat mulches over the years and I do water in the summer and add zero phosphate Kuranga fertiliser. Plants near the house survive with very little winter sun – surprisingly the saltbush *Rhagodia spinescens* does

well in this dry shade. My Grasstree was seed grown and in a pot for four years and was slow at first but has now taken off after six years in the ground and receives lots of attention.



Another show-stopper is the Correa reflexa "Jetty Red" a dense shrub to about 1 metre

Grass tree in nature strip

It flowers from April to July with its stunning red and green



Epacris impressa Bega Form

lanterns and gets no special care. Under the Corymbia a grafted grey-leaved Diplolaena grandiflora presents its beautiful orange flowers. The Bega form of Epacris impressa seems hardier than most species and I have lost a lot of Epacris on those summer days over 40 degrees.

One thing I'm trying for plants that like well-drained soil are some clay pipes I found online second hand. They used to be popular in the days of Austraflora nursery but I cannot source any new ones?

I'm waiting for the Lechenaultia biloba to flower in Spring but it is looking good.



Diplolaena grandiflora

Apart from a patch around the house and the clothesline negotiated at length with the inimitable Liz - it is very difficult to move anywhere in our back garden because of all the pots! I find I need to pot up to the next size for the welfare of the plant without care as where it will fit or how big it will grow. The grafted Grevillea aspera is now 2.5 metres tall and is one the Spinebills visit. Alyxia ruscifolia is a prickly but interesting small rainforest tree from NSW that just keeps getting bigger.

I also have a four metre tall

Red Cedar (Toona ciliata) in a pot (not shown) - a great timber in 200 years.

We successfully lobbied for Eucalyptus leucoxylon as the tree to line our street and twelve years later the street is full of birds. I've also established gardens in front of both neighbours – perhaps with a bit more care for car doors. APS KP member Geoff Crowhurst has done the same thing further along the street and added a collection of unusual Salvia to a native garden



Alyxia ruscifolia

spanning flats and several houses. In lockdown I've been reinvigorating the Naturestrips with new plantings after quietly adding 2m of sandy loam. Three different forms of Chrysocephalum apiculatum will feature and I'm trying the Swan River daisy that is not actually a daisy - Actinodium cunninghamii. I've also spread various Poa and other grasses through the garden as habitat.

Now all that's full I'll need to get into guerrilla gardening or negotiate a country property!
Liz? Liz??



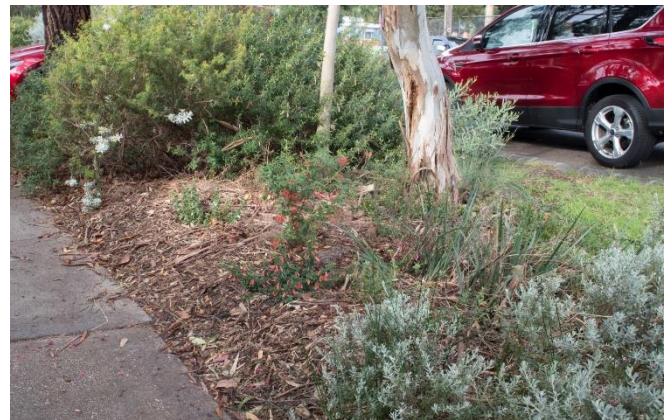
New plantings



Front garden



Terra cotta pipe planting



Next door nature strip

Survival of the fittest in containers – Neil Duncan

In about 2011 I bought several 40cm square self watering light weight containers which would be easy enough to move around the garden as needs be.

The planters were potted up with from 3 – 5 plants usually ones that wouldn't grow readily in the garden. The plants grew well and after 3-4 years matured. It was at about this stage that the battle began – who was going to survive in the pots because three are too many and only one or two will succeed.



Planter with trigger plant, hibbertias and scaevolas

Now when we plant in the garden we probably don't think of the trigger plant – *Stylidium grammifolium* as an easy to grow plant, but put it in a pot and it becomes a beautiful but aggressive competitor. Not only does it try and take over the pot it is in but it sows its seed quietly in the pot next to it and takes it over as well!

Another pot had the beautiful large flowered *Correa Longfellow* and the blue waxflower *Philotheca nodiflora* and the yellow kangaroo paw *Anigozanthos flavidus*. The first to go was the waxflower but the other two fought it out for another few years until this summer when the

correa gave up the fight. The pot has now been taken over completely by the kangaroo paw which will make a lovely display around Christmas time.



And the winner is Kangaroo paw

Correa Longfellow in its prime



Some great gardening tips from the late Shirley Carn

Courtesy Maroondah group

Quite a few members will remember Shirley Carn and her fantastic gardens in Monbulk. Here are some tips from Shirley that she gave in 2015 for a book the Maroondah group compiled for their 50 year history.

- If you have heavy clay soils, dig a hole and put some clay breaker at the bottom with pea mulch over the top. Then mix the original soil with potting mix and put the plant in the hole and fill with mixture. This will give the plants a chance to establish the roots before hitting the clay.
- Give a plant two goes, in different spots. If you are still unsuccessful, give up
- When you stake plants to protect them from wind, use a criss-cross of 2 stakes for support. Shirley only uses ties on eucalypts
- Put a rock or piece of wood at the base of small plants to give their stems support and protection
- Cut most plants back one third in summer to relieve stress.
- Never walk around the garden without a pair of secateurs in your hand.
- Brachyscomes – cut back to about one inch in summer, put some fertiliser around base, sprinkle with sugar cane to loosely cover plant to protect from summer sun
- Epacris - make sure they are not in the afternoon sun. They don't like "splendid isolation", so plant with other plants for company. If in sun, cut *E. impressa* back and shade for summer, removing the cover in autumn. Or else you can plant things around them for protection, like grasses or low plants such as *Wahlenbergia communis*, *W. stricta* and brachyscomes
- Slice a banksia flower into cross-sections and place these discs amongst mulch for decoration and interest.
- Be adventurous.
- Gardens are meant to be shared.

Newsletter articles

Newsletter articles and photos are always warmly welcomed. Members are strongly encouraged to send in anything of interest, whether it's a copy of an article read elsewhere, notes of a garden visit, gardening tips, specific problems or questions you have, details of a much-loved plant or - best of all - pictures of your own garden or its plants.

We aim to put out four newsletters per year, in April, July, October and December/January. The deadline for the next newsletter will be **Friday 25th September**

neilduncan61@gmail.com

Supper Roster

Thank to those members who supply the delicious suppers at our monthly meetings.
If it's your turn, we need: 1 litre milk plus sweet and/or savoury nibbles for about 30 people.
Tea bags, sugar, coffee and tea towels are all supplied (by Flo).
A fixed remittance of \$20 will be paid to cover your costs.

Please arrange a swap if you are unable to attend when rostered.

August:

September:

October:

November:

December:

Contact Flo Suter on 9370 0908

Set up before the meeting:

*Once the cupboard has been unlocked, please get out
enough cups for about 30 people, teaspoons and other cutlery,
any serving plates needed,*

2020 Committee

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Secretary: Anne Langmaid 9336 3228

Treasurer: Lauren Eagle 0401 267 424

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