

Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society
Latrobe Valley Group
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Golden Grevillea - *Grevillea chrysophaea*

Warning: No meeting in May!

As I am sure you all would have realised there will be no meeting this month. There is talk of Government restrictions being relaxed soon but of course people will also have to make their own decisions to suit their individual circumstances. Thank-you to Mike, Cathy, Daryl, Judy S., Pamela and Ross Auchettl for taking the time to create and send in your contributions. We all appreciate the variety that it brings to the newsletter.

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Hi Everyone. Well, one month down who knows how many to go. I hope your gardens are thriving from the extra attention afforded to them due to enforced social distancing. In my garden, since the last newsletter, the Golden Ash in my front yard has been sent to the plants 'God'. A native planting is being contemplated taking into account height, width, light to the house, shelter from the hot afternoon sun in summer, frost tolerance, root systems etc; to be continued.

I would like to share with you some snippets from Gardening Australia about germinating hints for growing native plant seeds and native plant seed collections. Josh Byrne, in Cracking Native Seed Germination, showed us tips for propagating native plants from seeds. You can't collect native seeds from the wild without a licence but they are available to buy on line. Some species become dormant, so they survive until the conditions are right for them to germinate. Here are a few ways to wake up the seeds from dormancy.

1. Heat Treatment: Seeds of the pea or Fabacea family, for instance the Black Coral Pea (*Kennedia nigricans*) or Native Sarsaparilla (*Hardenbergia violacea*) have extremely hard coats. Josh put them in a bowl and poured over some just boiled water and left them for 8-12 hours before planting them out into trays.
2. Scarification: (Literally meaning making scars). This is a good method to use on acacia seeds which also have hard coats. Josh used some Panjang (*Acacia lasiocarpa*), a low growing shrub. He had two bits of sand paper on a tray and gently rubbed the seeds between the layers for about a minute. It may help to wrap the top sheet around a piece of wood to hold it more easily. The seeds should be lightly scratched, not turned to dust! Then plant them as you normally would.
3. Cold stratification: Some plants need to experience the cold, damp conditions of winter before they're ready to germinate in spring. Josh filled a container with vermiculite then sowed the seeds of Soap Mallee (*Eucalyptus Diversifolia*) over the top. The vermiculite holds the moisture while allowing air through. Mist the mix, put the lid on and keep it in the fridge for about 4 weeks. After this it's placed in the nursery without the lid and kept damp until the seeds germinate. These are then pricked out into individual pots with seed-raising mix.
4. Inundation in water: Josh filled some trays with seed raising mix and put them in a large low container that he filled about halfway with water. This mimics the boggy conditions of marshes and suits plants that like this environment, such as the Queen Trigger plant (*Stylidium Affine*), a tufting species with pink flowers. He sprinkled a few of the tiny seeds over the top of the mix and pressed them in lightly. These were then left until they germinated and then were planted around a pond.

So, think about what the requirements might be for any seeds you sow, and keep in mind that there are guide books out there to help you out.

Happy gardening

Regards Rhonda

Hopefully, this newsletter finds you all in much the same condition as the last one did, although some may be going a little stir crazy from isolation (see Daryl's article below). In Jeeralang, most days start with the daily walk, followed by some project to fill the rest of the day. It is fair to say we haven't been bored and are coping ok although I am finding the gardening work quite tiring and much slower than my past performances. Prompted by my discovery that the bees were using the bee motel last month, I tried to get creative with an old concrete block and some left-over reinforcing mesh from the clean-out at Mary's father's house. With the mesh re-welded into a frame to support the block and a rusty tin roof to protect from the rain, the bees now have another option to call home. Of course, Mary is pleased to have a memento from her younger days and calls it Dad's Bee House.



There have been some successes in the front garden. Last year I broke my rule of (almost) never transplanting established plants by moving a



low-growing *Banksia* 'Stumpy Gold' from the dry, shady spot it had been suffering in for about 3 years. I had high hopes but of course, it died back slowly and I assumed the deed was done and it had moved on to a less troublesome place. A recent inspection, however, showed that one very small branch was not only green

but growing. I might just have got away with it this time! And a grafted *Eremphila tietkensis* that we purchased from the Arid Lands Botanic Garden at Port Augusta last year has not only put on steady if slow growth, but is now starting to flower with interesting pale blue flowers and pink calyces.



While on the subject of the Arid Lands Botanic Gardens, you should have all received the email from them saying they are open for mail order business. I guess their normal pilgrimage of grey nomads has dried up and they will be keen to sell plants to keep an organisation going that probably runs on a shoestring anyway.

Phillip Vaughan is also available on line with his selection of plants. If you are missing the autumn plant sales and would like to do a bit of garden development, I am sure you could find something from these and maybe other sellers that a bit of research might uncover.

So, hang in there, try to get some exercise of some sort and find a project to get your teeth into. It may not be the best time to take cuttings but give it a try. Put a few in a warm, well-lit spot, and see what happens. Or if you have access to some seeds, give them a try. Whatever you do, as always, stay safe, stay happy and at some stage we will get back to some sort of normal.

Cheers, Col.

Species: *Petrophile teretifolia*.

Family: Proteaceae.

Derivation:

Petrophile: From the Greek *petros*, meaning 'rock', with the suffix *phileo*, meaning 'to love', thus rock lover.

teretifolia: From the Latin *teres* or *teretis*, meaning 'rounded, smooth'

and used botanically to mean 'round in cross-section, slender and cylindrical' and *folium*, meaning 'leaf', thus having slender, cylindrical leaves.



Name: Southern Pixie Mops, if anything.

Distribution: Endemic to the Eyre District in southern WA, in the sandy heaths associated with granite, roughly from east of Albany to Cape Arid and Israelite Bay.

Description: A small shrub which can get to 2m tall but is usually less than 0.5m, with several erect, spreading branches. Leaves are terete and up to 20cm long, usually less than 12cm, by 2mm in diameter, curved upwards and ending in a sharp point. Flowers occur in springtime, forming in ovoid to globular heads up to 4cm across. Individual flowers are pink to mauve and up to 2.5cm long, with a bright yellow to orange pollen presenter protruding from the flower tube.

Opinion: The title of this article should probably be amended slightly to read 'Plants that were in My Garden'! But this could be said of many of the 150+ PIMG articles I've written over the years. As of December 2018, I no longer have any Petrophiles or Isopogons in my garden, the last two specimens not liking the hot and dry end to the year and turning up their toes/roots. Hopefully some of the seeds collected off *Petrophile pulchella* will be viable and will germinate into some replacement plants for me. The Southern Pixie Mops, though, had not been alive long enough to set any seed, so I'm unlikely to obtain another one.

I purchased my specimen from Philip Vaughan's nursery near Pomonal in April 2017, while attending the Grevillea Study Group activity at the Marriott's garden near Stawell. Given my previous lack of success with WA Proteaceae in the garden, I was reluctant to plant my specimen in the soil, so instead placed it in a waterwell tub, with a bluestone pebble mulch and *Prostanthera aspalathoides* (yellow form) and *Isotoma axillaris* for company. Adjacent to the pathway on the western side of the house, the tub received plenty of sunlight and

the brunt of the weather that blows in from the west. All the plants did well for 12 months and all flowered in the spring of 2018, when the photos were taken. But then the rain



stopped in early December and the weather heated up, so that when we disappeared into the hills for our 10-day New Year break, the garden received no water and was subjected to hot, humid conditions. Consequently, when we returned in late December, everything in the tub was crispy brown except the Rock Isotome, which was lush and green and flowering its head off. I suspect that being in the tub meant that the roots overheated and cooked and only the local plant could cope. Perhaps if I'd planted the things in the ground instead, their roots would have remained cool enough to survive the week without water.

Sources: Sharr – WA Plant Names and their Meanings.
Elliot & Jones – Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 7.
Wrigley & Fagg – Banksias, Waratahs & Grevilleas, etc.



The seed factory – Production and Delivery.
Jackson garden at Jeeralang Junction.

Covid-19 and the autumn gardener's lament.

By Daryl Radnell

Ah, autumn. It could be called the gardeners' season. The stupefying heat of summer is over(?). Did we have a summer this year? I think Judy and I missed most of it as we were away in South Australia during those couple of hot days. But now the ground is still warm, the rains have started so it is the perfect time to get planting. Except for being isolated and cooped up in your own home. We would be spending a lot of time, and a not a small amount of money, in nurseries and plant sales normally as we stock up on those must have plants that tend to catch your eye. Unfortunately, the weather fluctuations of wet days followed by warmish days seems to have turbo-charged the weeds and apart from ripping



them out all we seem to be doing is mowing. I'm sure I can hear the grass laughing at me and growing behind the mower. It is also burning off season which means if the weather is good enough to venture outside then the atmosphere is filled with the tangy smell of burning wood and not necessarily from your own fire. Even in our relatively isolated area a decent day is filled with the sound of mowing and/or chain sawing and the air is filled with the smell of smoke. With everyone at home in Corona Isolation, every day is like a weekend.

But lots of plants are coming into flower. Some for the first-time including *Grevillia Moonlight*. This is a replacement for a failed transplant after the previous owners had planted one in the wrong place and it just got too big for its site. My attempt to transplant it finished up turning it into another one of the dead sticks in the garden. The *Hakea bucculenta* is in fine flowering form and looking more impressive every day.

It can be interesting trying to work out what we can do to occupy ourselves in our enforced isolation when the only thing to look forward to is rubbish bin day. I tried painting one of my many dead sticks to brighten up one corner of my "crop circle" (can you have a corner in a circle?). I like to call it my Jackson Pollock moment!



2020 Calendar photo spot - April.

By Cathy Beamish

We came across these plants whilst travelling in WA in 2018 with the Hakea Study Group. We were taken to Gull Rock National Park, which is east of Albany, where in amongst swampy vegetation we found the tiny pitcher plants. There were green ones, as shown in our calendar, and red ones, as shown in the picture in Mike's article below. They varied in size from tiny to a few centimetres tall.

I remember stumbling around over uneven ground trying really hard to not step on any of the plants or get caught in any mud holes but I did end up with damp knees due to kneeling when taking photos.



I can't remember if we also saw ANOTHER new Hakea [No, we didn't – Mike], as I was over them again by then! This site is also well known for its colony of Eastern Queen of Sheba Orchids, but our timing was off, we missed out on photographing them as they had finished flowering for the year.

The Albany Pitcher Plant.

By Mike Beamish

The Albany Pitcher Plant (*Cephalotus follicularis*) grows only in the south-west of Western Australia, in swampland never more than 50km inland from the coast, between Augusta in the west and Cape Riche in the east. It is a low-growing, perennial, rosette-forming plant with a woody taproot that, over time, forms branching, rhizome-like structures from which new growth emerges. Two types of leaves are formed: firstly, normal green, oval leaves develop in clusters in the centre of the plant; then pitcher leaves develop around the outside of the clusters. Prey animals are attracted to nectar glands on the outer surface of the pitcher, the underside of the lid and in the mouth of the pitcher. The throat of the pitcher is very slippery and has a rim of sharp, downward-pointing teeth, so once the prey enters, they cannot escape and eventually fall into fluid-filled base of the pitcher, where they are broken down and absorbed by numerous enzyme-producing glands. The flowers of the plants are small, pale and unimpressive and borne in clusters on scapes up to 60cm tall, which reach above the surrounding vegetation. (Source: Bourke & Nunn – Australian Carnivorous Plants)



Cashmere Drive POP-UP Café.

By Pamela Cox

Covid-19 has had a profound impact on all our lives but it has also led to innovative ideas. On the 10th of April I turned 70 but celebratory plans organised in January were out of the question. Our neighbour Susan approached Yvonne with an idea to have a "Pop Up Cafe". Susan baked a cake & together with Yvonne organised nibbles. We practiced "social distancing" over our mutual fence, shared a wine or two and had a wonderful afternoon. On reflection I decided it was one of the best birthdays I have had; certainly, the most memorable.



[Happy 70th birthday to Pamela from all of us in the group. Ed.]

Burrendong – A real Beauty.

By Judy Stirrett

I have sent in some more photos of *Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty'. I had photos of it in newsletter 279 but I just cannot resist this plant. It is a mass of flowers now. It's about 10 years old, is densely sprawling and about 3m wide by 2m high. The birds, insects, bees and butterflies just swarm it. The northerly position must suit it well.



And this picture is of Daryl's Blue Pole in the crop circle. It looks really good surrounded by some very healthy strappy and grassy plants. *Anigozanthos* (Kangaroo Paw Giant Red); *Lomandra longifolia*; *Lomandra affinis cylindrica* (L. Fibre Optic); and *Lomandra confertifolia rubiginosa* (L. Crackerjack) are all filling in around it nicely.

In the last Growing Australian, No. 251 March 2020 p18, there was a book review written by Cathy Powers. The book was *Caterpillars, Moths and their Plants of Southern Australia* by Peter McQuillan. She gave a good review, so I purchased a copy. I have been looking at Butterfly/Moth ID books but have found most don't have a picture of the caterpillar and the adult. It's one or the other. This book has very good ID pictures of both, plus the food plants they like. For example, the Bardi



Moth (*Abantiades atripalpis*) caterpillar likes the roots of various eucalyptus especially *E. camaldulensis* (River red gum). I have seen the pupa cases under some of our Eucalyptus in the paddock. For anyone interested, I would certainly also recommend this book.

The Curious Case of the Climbing Echidna.

By Ross Auchettl

While unnecessary travel is banned, at 70,000 hectares in size Wombat State Forest is a wonderful place to practice social isolation - if you live close by. While walking up Diggers Track, my attention was drawn to an echidna foraging near a small log. At first everything was pretty standard, nothing that we field naturalists haven't seen before.



But after snuffling around a stump for a while it climbed up on the snapped off section of the tree.



I have never seen anything like it before.

Then it climbed down, and waddled off contentedly



[Ross Auchettl is the son of our leader Rhonda and lives near Bacchus Marsh – Ed]

Coming events of interest

Note: Please confirm events are still running before attending any.

2 May APS Mornington Plant Sale, Seawinds, Arthurs Seat State Park, Purves Rd, Arthurs Seat. 10 am to 4 pm.

27 & 28 June 2020 - APS Ballarat Winter Flower Show at Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanical Gardens. 10am–4.00 pm.

25 & 26 July - Growing Friends Winter Plant Sale. Australian Gardens, Cranbourne near the Kiosk. 10 am to 4 pm.

5 & 6 September Open Garden Scheme – Bill Aitchison and Sue Guymer - 13 Conos Court, Donvale. Save the date.

12 & 13 September - Australian Plants Expo hosted by APS Yarra Yarra. Eltham Community & Reception Centre, 801 Main Road, Eltham from 10 am to 4 pm.

3 & 4 October - APS Grampians Pomonal Flower Show. Saturday 9 am to 3 pm, Sunday 9 am to 4 pm. Entry \$5, children free. Special feature botanical art and legacy of Banks, Solander & Parkinson. Also talks by guest speakers Jane Edmanson (Gardening Australia), Bianca Friend (Australian Wildlife Conservancy), Mike Bayly and Denis Crawford.

10 October - APS Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase, Echuca Masonic Lodge Hall, 426 High Street, Echuca. 9.00 am to 4.00 pm. A huge flower display, plant sales, floral art, Native Bonsai, basket weaving and other displays and demonstrations.

17 October - APS Mitchell Plant Expo and Sale. Kilmore Memorial Hall, 14 Sydney Street, Kilmore. From 9 am to 3 pm.

17 & 18 October - APS Ballarat Spring Flower Show at Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanical Gardens. 10am–4.30 pm.

17 & 18 October - Growing Friends Spring Plant Sale. Australian Gardens, Cranbourne near the Kiosk. 10 am to 4 pm.

24 & 25 October 13th FJC Rogers Seminar on Mint Bushes & Allied Genera. Hosted by APS Yarra Yarra in Eltham. Saturday venue Eltham Community & Reception Centre, 801 Main Road, Eltham. First newsletter has just been published 26/2/2020

2019 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar				
Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
May			Meeting Cancelled due to Corona virus	
Jun	Thursday	11	Calendar photo competition night – still to be confirmed due to Corona virus	7:30PM
Oct		2,3,4	Trip to the Grampians?	

Rainfall for 2019 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Wayne	Tanjil South	21	20	51	42	97	72	127	205	152	80	134	155	1156
John	Traralgon South	16	23	21	37	145	54	111	247	112	34	180	29	1007
Diane	Drouin	8.5	37	57	47	125	63	101	200	114	70	159	32	1010
Mike	Boolarra	9	23	51	43	132	67	106	207	118	52	155	42	1002
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	8	38	49	32	120	59	103	176	93	42	151	37	906
Brian	Drouin	6	29	63	51	125	57	101	197	116	65	177	28	1015
Carolyn	Yarragon	10	22	26	42	138	79	103	226	119	60	172	30	1028
Judy	Moe South	12	22	52	43	152	81	127	118	147	56	167	51	1028

Rainfall for 2020 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Wayne	Tanjil South	136												136
John	Traralgon South	76	55	15										145
Diane	Drouin	121	147	40										307
Mike	Boolarra	93	126	40										259
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	86	134	39										259
Brian	Drouin	124	136	46										306
Carolyn	Yarragon	105	171	35										311
Judy	Moe South	99	95	33										227

<https://apsvic.org.au/aps-latrobe-valley/>

Leader:	Rhonda Fitch	0459749885	rhonda.l.fitch@aussiebroadband.com.au
Deputy-leader:	Brian Hetherington	0497000925	heth3818@gmail.com
Secretary:	Judy Hetherington	0497000925	heth76933@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Mike Beamish	0447452755	mcandcjb@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor:	Col Jackson	0429095527	coljackson57@hotmail.com
Website:	John Stephens	0439755013	jsst@aussiebb.com.au
Librarian:	Pamela Cox	0429194733	theroseglen@yahoo.com.au
Publicity	Delma Hodges	0408398385	rj3dh2@aussiebb.com.au

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Title page photo: *Grevillea chrysophaea* at Holey Plains State Park by Mike Beamish



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