

Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society
Latrobe Valley Group
Inc. No. A0045337C
Issue No. 287 - June 2020

Golden Grevillea - *Grevillea chrysophaea*

Warning: No meeting in June!

The June meeting was to be our calendar photo competition with everyone voting on the candidates in person. Cathy has now taken it upon herself to run an 'on-line' version of the voting; see my editor's notes for the basic rules and Cathy's email for other details. So, go through your photo storages or get out into the garden and take a few new photos and see if you can come up with a winner to present to the world in our calendar. If you are having trouble with the technology, give Mike, Cathy or Col a call and we will do what we can to assist.

In this issue:

Page

- | | |
|-------|--|
| 2 | Leader's Report - Rhonda Fitch |
| 3 | Editor's Notes - Col Jackson |
| 4 - 5 | Plants in my Garden - Mike Beamish |
| 6 - 7 | In the beginning.....1770 - Doris Chambers |
| 8 - 9 | My Favourite Garden Location - John Stephens |
| 10 | 2020 Calendar Spot - May - Judy Hetherington |
| 10 | Rainfall Registration Charts |
| 11 | Counting Cockies - Mike Beamish |
| 12 | Our New Winter Veggie Garden - Judy Hetherington |
| 13 | Coming APS events |
| 14 | APS Latrobe Valley Events Calendar |
| 15 | Membership Subscription Renewal Form |

With the Government starting to relax the lockdown rules a little, there is some hope on the horizon that we may eventually get a meeting. Of course, we still cannot have a June meeting so the newsletter will have to suffice for now. But there is the possibility with further relaxation of rules, we may be able to arrange some sort of outdoor meeting for July. The Traralgon Railway Reservoir Reserve is an option as it has a roof sheltered area and some pleasant walks. If you have any other ideas, please let the committee know.

A reminder too, that both the APS LV group and Victorian group subscriptions are coming due and you will find the application form and details on the last page of this newsletter.

Here are some more hints for germinating native plant seeds from Clarence Slokee (ABC Gardening Australia).

While most seeds will germinate given enough light, heat and moisture, others need a little more encouragement and even tricks from nature itself. Fire is one of the most confronting characteristics of the Australian landscape but a lot of our plants have adapted to survive it. With Banksia, ripe seed can hang on the plant in woody cones for years until a fire passes through and then it will release its seed. One of the tricks you can use to get the Banksia to release the seed is to use a heat source, for example the oven, barbeque or put it on the open fire and the heat will cause the banksia pod to slowly pop open. Take the seed out and sow it. It's not just the heat of the fire that helps to sprout the seeds; it's also chemicals in the smoke. Clarence took the Banksia seeds and sowed them into a nice loose, sandy mix, he used a porous pot so that when it was watered, the water is going to help the smoke adhere to the seed. To get the smoke in there he used an old bee smoker. You put in dry material (use natural stuff) leaf litter, straw. Light it up, and when you have lots of smoke, cover the pot with the seed in it, with an old card board box with a few holes in the top for aeration. Add a hole in the side to put the spout of the bee smoker in. A few pumps of the bellows will fill the box up with smoke. Leave it for half an hour or more; enough that the water or moisture in the pot will bind that smoke and the chemical in the smoke will eventually find its way to the seed.

In arid areas it's all about the wattles. In the desert country, seeds need to be tough to survive blistering heat, dry winds and long periods without rain. So, a good trick to get wattle seed going is to recreate that hot sandy desert. Put wattle seeds into a container with some coarse sand. Shake it up and that abrasive action scratches the hard outer shell, allowing for the water to get in and a little root to pop out.

In nature, plenty of seeds pass through a bird, reptile or animal before being dispersed, clean as a whistle and with a little package of nutrients attached. If you want to use seed from fleshy berries such as Dianella, then remove the flesh, clean it well, before you sow the seed. One more thing that might help you with your seeds generally, is to let them soak in water overnight.

Happy gardening, regards Rhonda

Are the creative juices flowing or what? Another tremendous response to my pleas for newsletter material this month. Thank-you to Doris, John, Mike and Judy H. for your sterling efforts! Judy was concerned that her article was not a 'native plants story' but I felt it deserved inclusion as it was a project worth sharing in lockdown times, and was a creative solution that could be applied to some difficult situations with hard-to-grow natives. John's 'My Favourite Garden Location' apparently was Susan's idea but John got in first and suggested it could be a semi regular item in the newsletter. I certainly agree with him and look forward to Susan's (and others?) offerings.

It seems it is an unfortunate time for significant birthdays. Wayne celebrated his 70th birthday on May 11 with a dinner at home with the family. There are plans to have a bit bigger bash when circumstances allow, so stay tuned. Anyway, in the meantime, a very happy birthday to Wayne from all of us.

We had planned to have our calendar photo competition at the June Meeting but that is now unachievable. The committee have had some discussion and decided we will try to run the comp on line. The broad rules are the same as last year with six entries per member and six categories as follows: 1. Native flowers (close-ups of individual/group inflorescences only). 2. Native plants (whole plants, with trunks, foliage, flowers all displayed). 3. Landscapes (gardens or natural panoramas showing groups of plants and scenery). 4. Textures (natural patterns that don't easily conform to categories 1-3). 5. Native Fauna (critters in our gardens or natural landscapes that have an obvious association with native plants). 6. Arty-farty freestyle (anything associated with native plants that doesn't easily fit with categories 1-5, e.g. sculptures, statues, constructions etc). Individuals can have up to six entries; one in each category or six in one category or any combination that equates to the maximum six entries. Refer to Cathy's recent email for the on-line details and rules. If you are having trouble, contact Cathy, Mike or myself and we will try to guide you through it.

In the home garden I should be doing my autumn planting but I just haven't found the energy to start yet. A garden walk showed many correas are doing well and attracting the small honey eaters. In fact, as I was watching the small Grevillea hybrid below, the bush started to shiver in different places. This was, of course, a honey eater working the flowers from inside the shrub, and as I watched, the most I saw of it was its beak and a small portion of its face. So, carry on with your projects and hopefully we will get a meeting happening soon.

Cheers, Col.



Plants in my Garden 165

By Mike Beamish

Species: *Pauridia* (syn. *Hypoxis*)
vaginata.

Family: Hypoxidaceae (formerly part of
Liliaceae).

Derivation:

Pauridia: From the Greek *pauron*,
meaning 'small', referring to the
small size of plants.

Hypoxis: From the Greek *hypo*, meaning
'under, somewhat', and *oxys*,
meaning 'sharp, pointed', thus
somewhat sharp or pointed,
which may refer to the capsule,
which is elongated and
contracted at the base, or
possibly to the acrid taste of the
corms.

vaginata: From the Latin *vagina*, meaning
'sheath' and used botanically
to mean 'sheathed', referring to
the single sheathing bracteole
(a small leaf-like structure found
on a flower stem) half-way up
the flower stem.



Name: Yellow Star, Yellow Weather Glass.

Distribution: Widely distributed in the south of the continent (WA, SA, Victoria, NSW and Tasmania), growing in moist soils in grasslands and open woodlands.

Description: A perennial, small, tufting herb with 1.5cm round corms on the roots and linear, basal leaves to 35cm long by 3mm wide. Solitary yellow star-shaped flowers to 2cm across occur in spring and summer on stems to 35cm tall, that have a single sheathing bracteole half-way up the stem.

Opinion: Had to do quite a bit of research on this one! My specimen came from the Goldfields Revegetation Nursery at Mandurang (out of Bendigo) in October 2014, labelled *Hypoxis vaginata* Tiny Star and with a listed size of 5-10cm. As is typical of my poor gardening skills, it spent far too much time in its forestry tube but was amazingly still alive when I got around to planting it underneath the dining room windows on the north side of the house in late 2016 or early 2017. This species apparently resents any disturbance to its roots and usually rots away if it is disturbed, so imagine my surprise and luck when it not only survived,

but grew vigorously and flowered in December 2017. It is still alive today, though it is not thriving as well and did not flower in 2018 or 2019.



Because of its labelled small size, I suspect that my specimen is the variety listed on Flora of Victoria Online as var. *brevistigmata*. This name is derived from the Latin word *brevis*, meaning 'short' and the Greek *stigmatos*, meaning 'brand, mark', but I don't know what this is in reference to. The Flora also states the plant size as up to 10cm tall and gives a distribution in Victoria as scattered in grasslands and woodlands mainly north of the Dividing Range from Ballarat through Bendigo and Shepparton, up through Wodonga into NSW. Also, most of the species listed under *Hypoxis* in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand were absorbed into the historically South African genus *Pauridia* in 2013, based on phylogenetic studies. The only one left in *Hypoxis* in Victoria is *H. hygrometrica*, the Golden Weatherglass, but I don't understand the science behind these changes. I hope it's not as ridiculous as the *Banksia*/*Dryandra* debacle.

Sources: Sharr – WA Plant Names and their Meanings.
Elliot & Jones – Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 5.
Corrick & Fuhrer – Wildflowers of Victoria.
Online – Google Search, Floras of Victoria, WA and SA.

Four plant species we now recognise as Banksia were found by Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander as they walked through the Australian east coast bush, later named Botany Bay by James Cook in 1770.

I became interested in Banksias in the Inverloch coastal area around the same time Celia Rosser was painting her first blooms from the Marlo district.



During holidays in Queensland I found extended marshy coastal areas with large swathes of *Banksia robur* featuring the unusual green coloured buds; I wonder if those areas still exist?

Later it became apparent wherever we travelled the coastline a variety of Banksias could be found. As a genus they have a wonderful variety of blooms, all similar in structure but with a huge range of colour and foliage. From the Fitzgerald River to the West Coast. From Tasmania to Cape York,





Dwarf form of *Banksia spinulosa*



Banksias get no special treatment in our garden. *B. praemorsa* has produced two flowers in, maybe, ten years. *B. menziesii* survived around two years with no blooms. I enjoy flowers that can survive in the house as well as attracting a variety of birds to the garden. *B. occidentalis* ticks all the boxes: can be grown from a cutting, flowers profusely with metallic red styles, a manageable large shrub that responds to pruning...I hope??

With 76 Banksias to choose from there are sure to be one or more suitable for your garden. [Note: The photos shown in this article were all taken in the Chambers' garden at Traralgon in early May. Ed.]



Banksia occidentalis



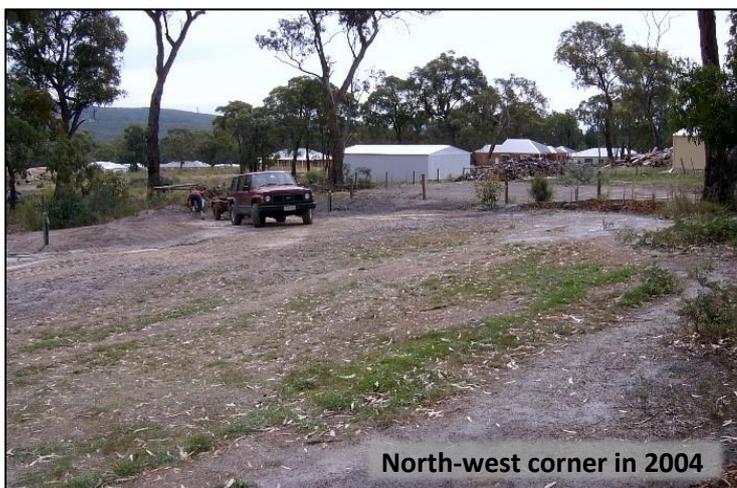
Banksia baueri

My Favourite Garden Location.

By John Stephens

Some people probably thought we were mad; we left a perfectly good house to make a tree change. Well, we had become tired of the annual termite problem and subsequent repairs, so despite thinking we had won the battle we decided to move into the bush – with more termites!

Our old home, which we designed and built in 1978 had a small but impressive native garden with tree ferns and a substantial pond and it attracted lots of birds. We had several Xanthorrhoea, Eucalypts, Callistemon and a garden dedicated purely to Grevilleas. It was beautiful, easy to maintain, very neat and tidy and apart from being too small, was a very rewarding place to be out of the “rat-race”.



North-west corner in 2004



The same angle in 2020

Our newly chosen block at 2770 square metres was four times larger than our old town block. In fact, four previous house blocks could easily be enclosed in the new one without touching the boundaries or each other. As we were on well drained sandy loam it would be perfect for Australian native plants. So, for the garden of our dreams! Due to the massive site works for the house build we were unable to commence the garden immediately. In fact, we shifted in June 2000 and probably did not really start the garden for some four or five years. Many truckloads of our “soil” i.e. sandy loam and “coffee rock” ended up at Colin and Mary’s place before we could complete the back garden. Of course, that is why their garden is so good!

The new block was part of an estate that was originally a “firewood” forest. We believe the trees had been harvested by previous owners for firewood for sale in the district. Certainly, we originally had a dozen or more large trees, *Eucalyptus obliqua* and *E. ovata*. Some of these were removed to locate the house however we left as many as we thought practicable. As our previous garden was mainly native species we decided to once again go “native”, however this time it would be all native, “weeds” were banned!

Our garden evolved rather than being planned. We wanted something that encompassed the patches of remnant vegetation with new plantings of Australian species with large areas of lawn. We decided to try for a “Land for Wildlife” approval however despite the judge being impressed we failed to achieve the award. However, a few years later we easily achieved this status. Our garden is wilder and more natural than our previous garden and it is that aspect that I particularly enjoy.



Early in the development we decided that we should have a garden seat; somewhere to sit and just enjoy our surrounds. We now have several additional garden seats or locations to sit and enjoy our garden. However, that original seat, a permanent fixture, was located in one back corner of the block and is still there. Several plantings were located in the area and along the perimeter fence although local species have “popped up” over the years to supplement these, and the seat is now surrounded by a forest. Planted species include a *Corymbia*, *Allocasuarina*, *Xanthorrhoea*, *Grevillea chrysophaea*, *Grevillea* “White wings” and a mix of *Anigozanthos*.

That seat is now my favourite place to sit and observe the wildlife, particularly the many bird species that visit, and furthermore I use it to solve some of the problems of the world!



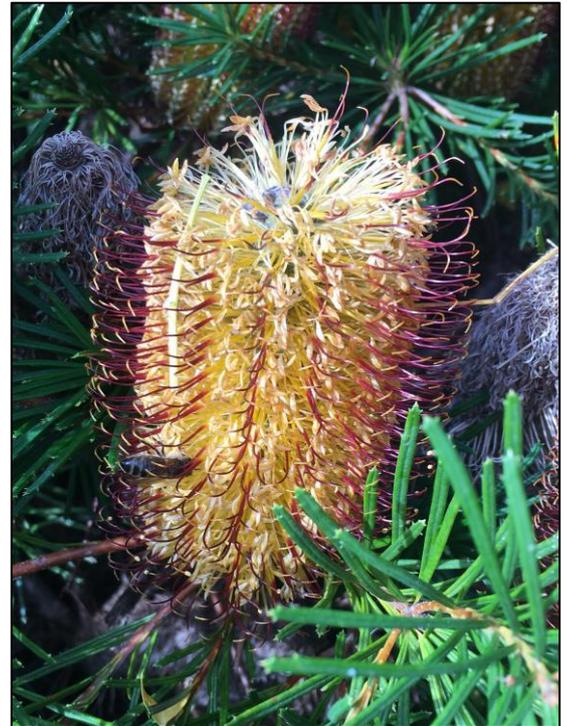
2020 Calendar photo spot – May.

By Judy Hetherington

Last June we hosted the granddaughter of our best friends in US for about 4 weeks. She had just graduated from high school and wanted to have a “golfing break” before heading to university. She is an excellent golfer and has won golfing scholarships to an engineering university in Arizona. As we do with our American visitors, we take them to Healesville Sanctuary. What better place to see so many native Australian animals in native habitat? The sanctuary itself is an excellent example of local bushland.

After a visit to the Wildlife Health Centre, the pathway takes you through a garden area that has mass plantings of the same Banksia. The masses of blooms were attracting so many insects! I couldn't resist trying to capture one of them.

Thank you to Cathy and Mike for identifying this as a Hairpin Banksia!



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	108	66	163									473
John	Traralgon South	76	55	15	134									279
Diane	Drouin	121	147	40	170									476
Mike	Boolarra	93	126	40	159									418
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	86	134	39	152									411
Brian	Drouin	124	136	46	163									469
Carolyn	Yarragon	105	171	35	138									449
Judy	Moe South	99	95	33	159									386

Counting Cockies.

By Mike Beamish

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos have been regular visitors to my garden over the last decade, with the large Eucalypts and Coast Banksia on their list of attractions. Their favourite though is the Willow-leaf Hakea, *H. salicifolia*, that lives at the end of my driveway. It is up at about 8 metres in height with a pretty dense canopy and it is not unusual to come out of the house to find the driveway (and any cars parked in it) covered in the prunings of the Hakea, courtesy of Cockies last meal. Usually they are pretty noisy birds and make their presence readily noticeable, as they quite often have a sentry posted to warn their feeding comrades of imminent threats or a juvenile bird/s constantly braying for attention. Sometimes though, they sneak in quietly and the only giveaway to their presence is the regularly crack of the nuts being opened by their incredible beaks. The other day I wandered out my front door only to scare a number of birds out of my tree, into the offspring of my tree growing in my neighbour's garden over the road. The photo is taken from the end of my driveway of my neighbour's tree, my tree is not visible on my direct right. There are at least a dozen birds in this tree, how many can you see? I think there are eight visible?



[I reckon Mike may have had a few too many red wines when he counted. I magnified the photo on screen and could only find seven – Ed.]

Our new winter veggie garden.

By Judy Hetherington

The problem: Those of you who visited our garden on the 'West Gippsland Garden Visit Day' will know that it is on the northeast side of a hill. That, plus a number of large trees and shrubs, means that although land appears available, there is no veggie garden area that receives enough hours of sun to successfully grow tomatoes and other veggies.

The Solution: We are fortunate to have several apple orchards in Drouin and Fankhauser Apples has an open Coolstore every Tuesday. We've been buying beautiful apples directly from Fankhauser for several years now. Periodically, they offer for free old tree nets that are left over or not needed. Although Brian and I have talked about putting in wicking beds, we just never found that round-to-it. Until one day there was a stack of wooden apple bins with a "For Sale" sign on them for \$65 each. Perfect!

I was thinking 2 but Brian brought home 4 of them. They are located at the end of the drive next to Brian's workshop, the place that gets the most sun year-round. We knew the basics of how to make wicking beds, but Brian still did his research on the web.

First, the boxes were a great height for easy reach for us older gardeners, but they would have taken way too much soil to fill. Brian had a solution though. The building steps were:

1. Brian used various Styrofoam boxes to fill the bottom.
2. He lined the inside of the boxes with old carpeting to cushion the sides and bottoms so the liner wouldn't get holes in it.
3. We bought pool liner and Brian lined the insides.
4. PVC pipes were installed to allow for filling the reservoir at the bottom.
5. A drainage hole was made so excess rain water can drain.
6. Off to the Garden Supplies to buy scoria to fill in across the bottom. (No soggy feet for our veggies!)
7. Next came the garden soil, mulch and worm juice.

There were a couple of other details, but the beds were finally ready for sowing. The seeds took a while to germinate, but now the boxes are getting fuller every day. There are several kinds of lettuce (the leaves of which we pick daily), beet root, carrots, turnips, bok choi, Chinese cabbage, "regular" cabbage, and probably others I can't remember. We're ecstatic with our Winter Veggie Garden!



Coming events of interest

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

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



Cracked dry mud in perched lake on Fraser Island

2019 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar

Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
Jun			No physical meeting to be held due to Corona virus, However, we will be attempting to run an 'On Line' Calendar photo competition, see above.	
July			Depending on social gathering rules we may be able to arrange an outdoor meeting.	
Aug			All going well, our AGM?	
Oct		2,3,4	Trip to the Grampians?	

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

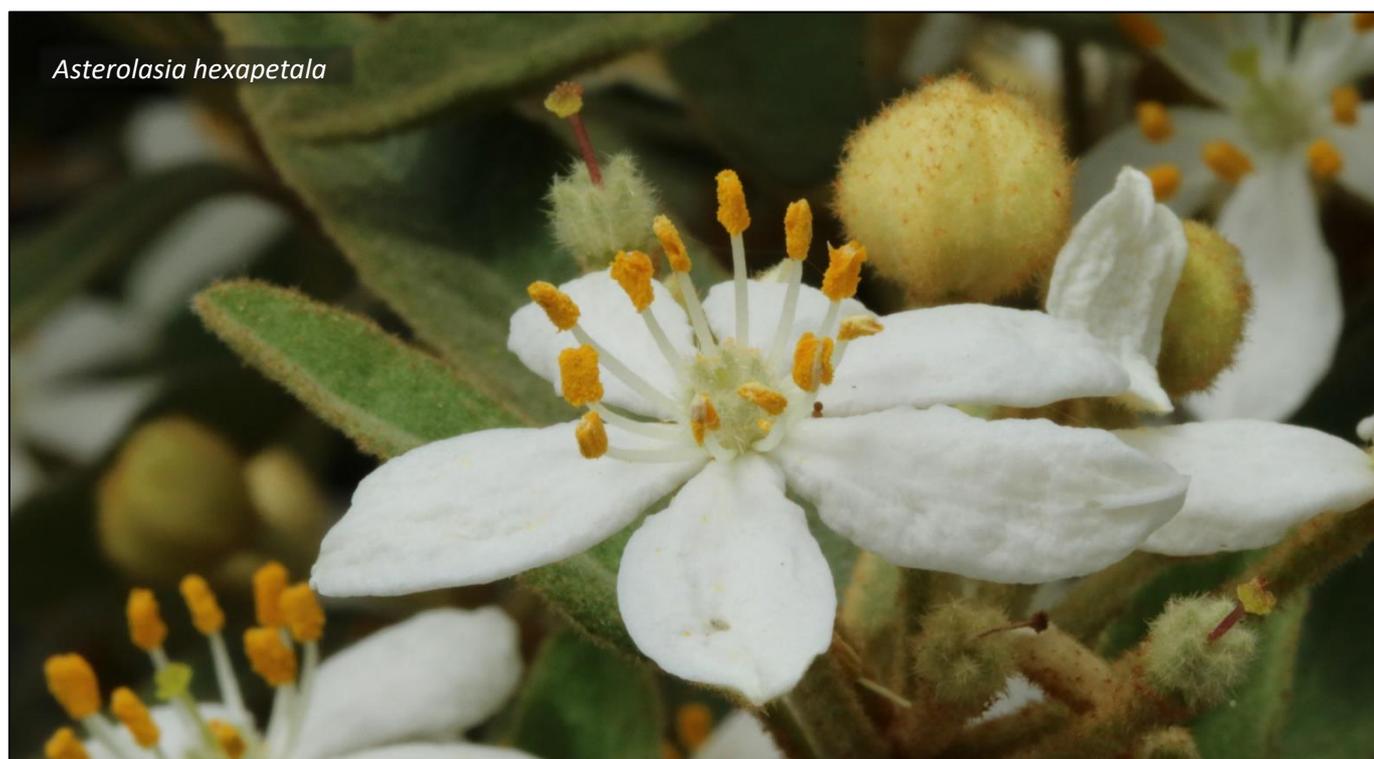
Leader:	Rhonda Fitch	0459749885	rhonda.1.fitch@aussiebbroadband.com.au
Deputy-leader:	Brian Hetherington	0497000925	heth3818@gmail.com
Secretary:	Judy Hetherington	0497000925	heth76933@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Mike Beamish	0447452755	mcandcjb@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor:	Col Jackson	0429095527	coljackson57@hotmail.com
Website:	John Stephens	0439755013	jsst@aussiebb.com.au
Librarian:	Pamela Cox	0429194733	theroseglen@yahoo.com.au
Publicity	Delma Hodges	0408398385	rj3dh2@aussiebb.com.au



Golden Grevillea
Grevillea chrysophaea

HOMEGROWN NATIVE PLANTS MAYBE SOLD AT EACH MEETING. COPYRIGHT: ARTICLES OR INFORMATION ARE NEEDED FOR EVERY MONTHLY NEWSLETTER. PLEASE ACKNOWLEDGE THE SOURCE AND ORIGINAL AUTHOR. SEND YOUR ARTICLES TO THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR; note SUBMISSION DEADLINE IS THE 25TH OF EACH MONTH. MEMBERSHIP FEES; per ANNUM: TO BE PAID BY 30TH JUNE FOR BOTH LATROBE VALLEY GROUP Inc. AND AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY (SGAP Victoria) Inc.

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



Asterolasia hexapetala

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY VICTORIA Inc.

Incorporation No.A0002023D

NEW/RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION FORM

For new members and for those renewing membership for 2020/2021.

Note: This is a combined membership form for both APS Victoria and the APS Latrobe Valley Group. If you complete this form, please disregard any APS Membership Form that may be automatically sent out to you with your APS Victoria newsletter. Your details and the appropriate payment will be forwarded to APS Victoria.

- I wish to join APS Victoria (for new Members only).
 I agree to be bound by the Rules and Bylaws of the Associations.

Please fill in all details

Title/s _____ **First name/s** _____

Surname/s _____

No. and Street or Road _____

Suburb/Town _____ **Postcode** _____

Telephone: Home _____ **Mobile** _____

Email _____ **Signature** _____

Please indicate the membership type by ticking below – all membership types include one copy of the Growing Australian newsletter each quarter.

Single membership. \$35

Household membership. \$40

Overseas membership. \$53

Student membership. \$26

SUB TOTAL (APS Vic Inc.) \$

Please **ADD** membership of APS Latrobe Valley Group Inc. No. A0045337C

Single. \$10

Household. \$15

SUBTOTAL \$

If you wish to subscribe to Australian Plants magazine via APS Victoria, please ADD

Australian Plants magazine. \$15

TOTAL \$

Please make Cheque/Money Order payable to 'APS Latrobe Valley Group Inc.' or direct credit to BSB 063522, Account 10163800, use your surname as reference and advise the Treasurer.

Treasurer: Mike Beamish, PO Box 112, Boolarra 3870, 0447452755, mcandcjb@gmail.com