

Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society
Latrobe Valley Group
Inc. No. A0045337C
Issue No. 288 - July 2020

Golden Grevillea - *Grevillea chrysophaea*

Warning: No formal meeting in July!

Once again, there will be no formal meeting this month. We will, however, attempt to arrange an informal outdoor get-together, with appropriate group sizes and distancing. Mike is thinking maybe Mt Worth State Park and will contact us via email if we are going ahead with that plan.

Also, the AGM is looming in August. We may not be able to achieve that, but people could give some thought to putting their hand up for a role in our group.

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Hello everyone. Well, just as Covid rules looked like they might loosen up we start getting nasty outbreaks again. We are not expecting to have any normal meeting this month but Mike has suggested we might manage a daytime outing, possibly to Mt Worth State Park to make it easier for those in West Gippsland. Once again, the idea is to keep distance and not gather in one big group. Stay tuned, Mike will send out an email if we are going ahead with this.

Again, a native plant seeds theme, this time by Gardening Australia's Tino Carnevale.

At the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Garden, valuable work is being done to preserve and conserve Australia's horticultural heritage - one seed at a time. Looking after the gardens' significant collection of rare and threatened Australian native plants is Lorraine Perkins, the Curator of Conservation Collections and Sub-Antarctic Flora. The work that they do is critical, in relation to plants used in the displays at the gardens, but also for the seed orchard they run onsite. 'Seed orcharding' is essentially the process of growing particular plants, that may be threatened, or those that are difficult to propagate, for the purposes of collecting and storing seed within their seed bank. Some of the plants found in the seed orchard include the rare Southern Grevillea (*Grevillea australis*), and the Davies Wax-flower (*Phebalium daviesii*). They also have a few specimens of the critically endangered Freycinet Wax-flower (*Philothea freyciana*), found only in the Freycinet National Park in Tasmania. "When harvesting seed for conservation purpose, you want to capture as much diversity within the plant population as possible". In addition to collecting the seeds from these plants, the nursery also propagates cuttings of the Wax-flower which means cross pollination occurs, and the seeds are genetically diverse.

Many plants grown by the nursery have never been grown in cultivation before, and are provided to the nursery as cuttings, often from extremely remote locations. This presents its own challenges, in firstly trying to get these cuttings to grow, but also trying to work out what growing media and conditions they might require. To ensure a secure collection of seeds within the seed bank, the nursery team are required to produce and collect a mere 10,000 seeds from each plant variety they have! Some plants there only have a collection of a couple of hundred seeds. That may be due to lack of the correct pollinator, environmental conditions, or maturity - a range of conditions will impact seed production.

To encourage pollinators, the team have attempted to create habitat under the nursery benches, by planting a range of pollinator attracting plants, including the Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*). This plant brings in moths, bees and insect pollinators, and has been quite successful. The particular *Hardenbergia* grown at this site is actually an endangered variety from a small island off the coast of Tasmania. The production and saving of seeds at this Botanic garden (and others like it around the world) act as an insurance policy, securing species into the future. Because of COVID 19 I wonder what is going to happen to funding for these projects and the environment into the future I worry that the funding will be slashed to pay back the enormous debt. Has the earth got enough time?

Happy gardening, regards Rhonda

Editor's Notes.

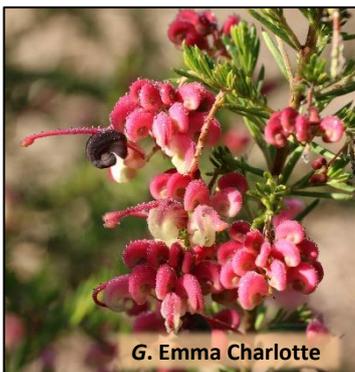
By Col Jackson

This month the nice days have been garden days and I have managed to put nearly a hundred new plants in the ground. I have also got started on some long-neglected weeding. You know, you kid yourself that it's not too bad yet but then you suddenly realise it is BAD! Never mind, now that I have started it's easier to keep going and I will gradually work through it.

There is some really good flowering happening at the moment too, Correas of course are doing well at this time of year, and a lot of Grevilleas are now coming into full bloom. A walk around with the camera as I was putting this newsletter together found 10 different species of Grevillea with good displays, which I have put into a bit of a montage below.

Once again, a big thank-you to this month's contributors, Jill, Judy, Mike, and Peter and Wendy. I like Judy's thoughts. If we are unable to meet formally to discuss ideas, then write a few lines and send them in to me. I will find a way of fitting them into the newsletter to share with all. Remember, it doesn't have to be a big production, just a short article (maybe a photo if you can) and I will do my best.

Here's hoping to catch up with you soon,
Cheers, Col.



Species: *Eremophila macdonnellii*.

Family: Myoporaceae.

Derivation:

Eremophila: From the Greek *eremos*, meaning 'solitary' or 'lonely', but in this case referring to 'lonely places (deserts)', with the suffix *-phileo*, meaning 'to love', thus "desert lover", referring to the preferred habitat of most species.

macdonnellii: Named after Sir Richard G. Macdonnell, a 19th century Governor of South Australia.



Name: None, but Macdonnell's Emu Bush sounds good if I make one up.

Distribution: Widely distributed in arid central Australia (SA, NT and south-west QLD), growing in sand on dunes, swales and plains, usually associated with Mulga (*Acacia aneura*) and Porcupine Grass (*Triodia* sp.) grasslands.

Description: A rounded, compact shrub to 2m tall and 5m broad. Leaves are variable in both colour and shape and can be pale grey to dull or bright green, with varying degrees of hairiness. They can be narrowly linear and acute (sharply pointed) to 35mm long and 2mm wide at one extreme or smaller and ovate (egg-shaped) to 4mm by 2mm at the other, but usually 15mm by 9mm. Deep blue to purple, rarely pink flowers occur singly in the leaf axils in late spring to mid-summer, but can occur sporadically if conditions are suitable. They are up to 45mm long with variably-shaped calyces with 5 pointed lobes and corolla tubes divided into 2 lips, with the lower lip having 3 lobes.

Opinion: My little specimen came from Neil Marriott as a thank you for helping out in his garden over Easter in April 2017. It was planted out pretty quickly (for me!) along the fence that divides my front garden from my vegetable patch in the backyard. My thinking was that the fence would reflect light and warmth on to the plant and the adjacent large Gippsland Mallee (*Eucalyptus kitsoniana*, which is not the mallee form, but a 20m tree)

would keep the rich brown clay loam soil drained enough to prevent drowning. So far, so good, the plant is still alive and has flowered in January in both 2018 and 2019, although it is still only 15cm tall. The other Eremophilas planted along this fence are also still alive, but are growing a little bit more quickly. The only plant that has died here (not counting the previous 2 Hakeas, *H. nodosa* and *H. drupacea*, which both fell over and were removed) is the little, hard-to-propagate Pomaderris from the Wellington River valley. Go figure!



Sources: Sharr – WA Plant Names and their Meanings.
Elliot & Jones – Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 3.
Chinnock – Eremophila and Allied Genera.
Boschen, Goods & Wait – Australia's Eremophilas, etc.

Postscript: This article was written in February 2019 and is therefore outdated. Much has changed in this area of the garden. Firstly, this plant died over the winter of 2019, so the banner of this installment should be altered to "Plants that were in My Garden". Secondly, the Gippsland Mallee referred to in the article was removed in February 2020, due to its proximity to the house and increasing signs of borer attack, making us fearful of imminent structural collapse. The saga of the tree loppers is a story for another edition of the newsletter!

Tasmanian nursery dream.

By Jill Fidler

While in Tasmania in early March, I visited the Forth Valley Bush Nursery and Gardens on Wilmot Road, Forth. Tucked away in this beautiful part of Northern Tasmania, it is surrounded by 400 acres of bush, made up of private property and crown land. The nursery, established 13 years ago by Shaks Johnson, occupies 11 acres and offers indigenous Tasmanian and Australian native plants. A real bonus here is the bushwalk wrapped around the nursery with plants growing in their natural habitat, including the biggest *Croweas* I have ever seen.



Shaks developed her interest in native flora in the early 80's after studying horticulture in Hobart, running a garden business and forming close connections with APS Tasmania. The move north 17 years ago to establish a sustainable life style was the start of her nursery dream. With the nursery now developed for 13 years, and living on the hill above it, her dream has been realised. Opening the nursery on Friday and Saturday leaves time to help with conservation at the Black River Reserve northwest of Wynyard. She also shares her knowledge on a stall at the North West Eco-Fest, a sustainability festival held annually at Ulverstone.



Definitely a must for all native plants' enthusiasts visiting Tassie, the nursery is refreshingly non-commercial, perfectly reflecting Shaks' passion for native flora, fauna and generally the whole environment. You can be sure the plants are grown with care and local knowledge.



A walk around Daryl's White Garden showed a *Buckinghamia celsissima* (Ivory Curl Flower) in flower. This plant is a member of the proteaceae family and could get to 25m but in cultivation is normally only shrub size. Our one is about 1.5m, was planted about 4 years ago and this is its first flowering. It is fairly spectacular with beautiful pendulous spikes of creamy flowers about 20cm long. Growing on a slight slope facing north it also gets the howling winds that rip up the hills. We also have a good show of various *Correas*, as well as *Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty', *H. laurina* (Pincushion Hakea) and *H. petiolaris* (Sea Urchin Hakea). Reference - Australian Native Plants, Wrigley and Fagg



As we have been unable to socialise and discuss things at meetings, I thought I would put into print some thoughts. The last newsletter had some very interesting articles. I liked Brian and Judy's wicking beds and the comment that they could be used for natives. That reminded me that some of the trial gardens at the Cranbourne Botanic Gardens are raised beds/wicking beds. As we know, some natives like to send down a good tap root to a water source while preferring the rest of the roots to be well drained. Wicking beds would provide that water and drainage. Looking back on the number of natives we have lost to root rot and/or compaction from heavy clay soil here makes me think a trial with a wicking bed may be worth a go. Thanks to all for the ideas.



I was inspired by Colin's wonderful renovation of a tired old letter box into an insect condominium. I had a couple of old hexagon terracotta pipes that I thought might work. I filled one with all types of bark, bamboo and sticks and hung it on the fence in the orchard with a side facing north for some winter warmth. To date it looks unoccupied. If it doesn't attract residents by spring, I may have to do a renovation. (Daryl did think the pipes would have made a better wine rack but having only 2 pipes, I thought it would be a very tiny wine rack).

2020 Calendar photo spot – January.

By Col Jackson

Bushfire can be a devastating force in our natural environment, particularly for our fauna. It is also however, a necessary part of the cycle of renewal for much of the flora. This photo, featuring *Xanthorrhoea australis* or Southern Grass Tree, epitomised for me the contrast between destruction and rejuvenation. The stark, blackened trunks complemented by the fresh, green, new growth and the creamy flower spikes nicely sums up the story for me!



The photo was taken at Tidal River on Wilson's Prom in October 2005 while on an APS day out. I was using our first digital camera, a little Ricoh point and shoot job. When Cathy asked if I had it in better resolution, I checked and found it was within the first 10 photos I took that day, all at very low resolution. I had obviously made adjustments to the camera after that, but unfortunately too late for what I now feel was my best shot of the day.

Pink Rock-orchid: *Dendrobium kingianum*.

By Peter and Wendy Cox

I am a hardy little native orchid with pink, white or purple flowers. I am an epiphyte – meaning you will find me on trees, stumps, fallen logs and moss-covered rocks. I am is a great 'beginners' orchid because I grow well in small pots. But I must be potted into an orchid mix of sticks, bark, gum pods, moss – NOT SOIL. I like good light but not full sun in summer. I will produce new plantlets (called kerkis) with leaves and roots – a complete plant. I am often crossed with other native dendrobiums and those hybrids are also worth growing. I am a great beginners orchid and I can guarantee you will love me.



'Grand Designs' for wildlife.

By Col Jackson

About 10 years ago, the council offered up to \$500 for an approved environmental project carried out by rate payers. Being environmentally minded and more than happy for the council to return a bit of my rates money, I applied for a grant to build and install wildlife nest boxes. With the rules agreed upon, I sourced a book on nest box design, some rough-sawn hardwood (with hindsight, perhaps not the most environmentally friendly option), nails, etc and set to work. I cut and packaged the material for each box (kit home style) and an unemployed friend of mine carried out the assembly, hole cutting and internal features.

With them installed in various trees around our property, it was some years later that Mike offered access to a special camera and we inspected as many as we could for habitation. All of them had nesting material visible in them and we even saw some sleepy Sugar Gliders in one. The years have been hard on some of them since, though. Some initial poor design on my part, along with tree growth, has contributed to their decline, to the extent that some are splitting apart and a couple had even fallen down.

It was Mike's recent distribution of nest box plans that prompted me to renovate and refurbish, firstly the boxes that had fallen down, but then also the existing ones still in trees. Most of the vertical hardwood is ok although some has required a bit of patching. I am replacing the tops with some old recycled 'Formply', a thick, durable plywood made for concreting formwork, all salvaged out of landfill in the good old days when we had unfettered access to the local tip. I am also hinging the lids with old hinges that my painter father-in-law had saved over the years. A clip made from wire and staples, some treated pine standoffs, and clothesline wire with old garden hose over it completes the work. Removing and installing these from the top of an extension ladder at full stretch has proved challenging, but, so far, no injuries. I must say though, on a couple of occasions only me and the laundry lady know how scared I was!



A renovator's delight



Lid, hinge and clip



Up-market bird box, complete with perch



Bat shelter



VACANCY – Enquire within



Sugar glider nest box

Coming events of interest

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

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
July			Stay tuned for an email or phone contact. We may be able to arrange another somewhat random short notice outdoor visit this month.	
Aug			At this stage, not even sure about our AGM?	
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	108	66	163									473
John	Traralgon South	76	55	15	134									279
Diane	Drouin	121	147	40	170	123								599
Mike	Boolarra	93	126	40	159	121								538
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	86	134	39	152	93	73							577
Brian	Drouin	124	136	46	163	125	47							641
Carolyn	Yarragon	105	171	35	138	125	48							621
Judy	Moe South	99	95	33	159	137								523



Phragmites australis flower head backlit by sunshine

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

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Golden Grevillea
Grevillea chrysophaea

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

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.

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