

# Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society  
Latrobe Valley Group  
Inc. No. A0045337C  
Issue No. 289 - August 2020

Golden Grevillea - *Grevillea chrysophaea*

## Warning: No formal meeting in August!

There will be no formal meeting this month. Our AGM will be deferred for now while we see how meeting rules pan out. We may be able to arrange an informal outdoor get-together, weather and rules permitting, with appropriate group sizes and distancing. We are thinking maybe Traralgon Railway Reservoir Reserve and you will be contacted via email if we are going ahead with that plan. Please understand that it is up to you to assess your risk profile and decide for yourself if you want to attend.

### 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      | A well-behaved vine - Judy Hetherington                         |
| 7      | Ramblings from Moe South - Judy Stirrett                        |
| 8      | 2020 Calendar Spot - Sept. & Dec. - Dianne Aumann               |
| 8      | Dendrobium speciosum: The Rock Orchid - Peter & Wendy Cox       |
| 9 - 10 | What is it: Rough or Smooth Tree-fern - Warren Simpson          |
| 11     | List of fern species in Mount Worth State Park - Warren Simpson |
| 12     | Coming APS events   |
| 12     | APS Latrobe Valley Events Calendar                              |
| 13     | Rainfall Registration Charts                                    |

Hi Everyone. I am still spending some time in the garden but it is now so wet that I am holding my breath hoping I don't lose any plants. Droughts seem to be long forgotten here!

We will not be having our AGM this month and apparently, we can let it slide for a couple more months without getting into trouble with the authorities. We will wait and see where this virus takes us and if it is possible for us to have a gathering of sufficient numbers or whether we will achieve our AGM by some other means. In the meantime, weather permitting, Mike is still thinking of another daytime walk, this time at the Traralgon Railway Reservoir Reserve. As always, consider your own risk profile and comfort level for this sort of activity before accepting the invite. We must keep distance from one another and not gather in one big group. Mike will let you know by email if we are going ahead with this.

Thanks to "The Guardian" I read this article about Bruce Pascoe, the author of Dark Emu. He was to be guest speaker at the Maroondah Gallery which was cancelled due to the "Virus". Bruce has a farm in East Gippsland but had lost his sheds in the recent bush fire. Luckily though, his house survived and the sheds have now been rebuilt. The fires also burnt a crop of Kangaroo Grass he was growing however, after the fire, another native grass grew instead. It is 'Dancing Grass', also known by its indigenous name of Mandadyan nalluk (I cannot find what its botanical name is). Bruce and a small team of co-workers have harvested the grass to produce native grains for flour and bread using traditional Aboriginal techniques. They produced so much grass that both their sheds were full and Bruce said they were racing against the clock to refine their methods so they could extract the seed and make flour. They had two to three weeks before the seed completely dropped. The team had a ceremony for the beginning of the harvest because they think it is the first time in 200 years that the Mandadyan nalluk has been harvested. Extracting seeds has been elaborate, experimental and with "a lot of grunt work". They worked for 8-9 days and they did something new every time. One day they used smoke and heat to extract seeds on a series of threshing tables. Some of their experiments worked and some didn't. Past Aboriginals had 120,000 years to get the process right, so it was a trial of different processes to find a solution. "The emotional toll of reviving this knowledge has been in the understanding of how much has been lost: while there was grief, there was also triumph". Bruce's team were able to work right through the coronavirus as the farm is very isolated.

In the end they milled some of the Mandadyan nalluk seed into flour and baked a loaf of bread. It was beautiful bread, really dark, with a rye-like flour. Incredibly dark, incredibly aromatic, but, also very tasty. Bruce was receiving 7-8 requests a day from bakers and restaurateurs to supply seed or flour, which they will do when they get the milling right. He also wants to show local farmers that letting these plants grow is worth the effort. "In future years it will be common place because we can grow these grasses on degraded land. I think there are a lot of farmers on marginal land now. They want some consistency, and they want reduced costs. Perennial grain is a way to do that". The dancing grass is only one of several perennials the team is working with, including kangaroo grass, warrigal greens, samphires and water ribbons. Source: Lorena Allam & Isabella Moore - The Guardian.

Happy gardening, regards Rhonda

This month has seen me busy around the property if not actually in the garden. A friend up the road had a need for some firewood and I had a number of smallish dead trees that were in the mowing zone, so we struck a deal. He assisted me with pulling down the trees, chain sawing and stump removal and in return received a few trailers of fire wood. All good exercise but it really tested me a few times. Part of this project was the removal of a pile of old planks and corrugated iron, which uncovered some more potential nest box material. So, fine days see me working around the yard and rainy days have been spent in the shed constructing more wildlife homes.

With no July meeting, Mike's offer of a gathering and walk at Mt Worth State Park was quite well attended, with most arriving early for a picnic lunch. What followed was a very pleasant walk followed by a cuppa in the car park. Warren was very helpful in teaching us how to identify the Soft Tree-fern and the Rough Tree-fern and, due to my incessant pestering, has produced a very good article further on in this newsletter.

Mike and Cathy also raised the possibility of a four-day getaway to Mary and I. We settled on basing ourselves at Toora Caravan Park and did several shortish day trips around the area which included Miller's Landing in the northern Prom., Cape Liptrap, Bear Gully, Agnes Falls, Port Franklin and a lovely wetland we discovered at Bald Hills. This particular wetland is hidden in a patch of bush and has a magnificent bird hide overlooking a large pond at



the end of a meandering track. It is well worth the visit if you are in the area. Mary got clever with her mobile phone and took these two panoramas; the one above of Bald Hills Wetland and the one below was on the walk to Miller's Landing looking over Corner Inlet.

Once again, thanks to this month's extra contributors; Judy S, Judy H, Peter and Wendy, Dianne and Warren. Of course, we take for granted Rhonda's and Mike's regular contributions, but I know they still take an effort. It's all helping to keep our newsletter entertaining and informative.



**Species:** *Solanum aviculare*.

**Family:** Solanaceae.

**Derivation:**

*Solanum*: A Latin word used by Pliny to name Nightshade, *Solanum nigrum*. My guess would be that it is derived from Sol, our sun and means 'opposite of sunlight', thus nightshade.

*aviculare*: From the Latin *avicula*, meaning 'small bird', in reference to many small birds' fondness for the fruit and seeds.



**Name:** Kangaroo Apple.

**Distribution:** Most common in the forests of eastern Victoria, but also found on the ranges and plains west of Melbourne, in Tasmania, NSW, Queensland, Lord Howe Island, Norfolk Island and New Zealand.



**Description:** An erect shrub or small tree to 4m tall and broad, with variably lobed or entire, deep green leaves up to 30cm long and 15cm across. It is the shape of some leaves, similar to the footprint of a Kangaroo, that leads to the common name. Cymes of 2-10 flowers arise from stem forks and leaf axils, mainly in spring and summer, but sporadically at other times. The flowers are about 4cm across and have 5 pointed corolla lobes that are blueish-violet in colour, with deeper violet starry markings. Fruits are egg-shaped berries up to 2cm long and 1.5cm wide, initially green but ripening to bright orange, red or scarlet. They are a favoured food of birds and are said to be edible for humans only when they are fully ripe.

**Opinion:** I wouldn't be eating them! Keep in mind that they are part of the most poisonous plant family on the planet and even though they

have relatives (tomatoes, potatoes, the Aboriginal bush-tomatoes of central Australia, etc) that have been proven safe in recent times, I believe the vote is still out on these. Besides, we have better things to eat, leave these for the critters that can eat them safely.

I have never deliberately planted this species in the garden, but it comes up regularly nevertheless, no doubt delivered in the droppings of those self-same critters. It is the epitome of pioneer plants and loves open disturbed areas, such as graded roadsides and burnt bushland, to germinate in. They are easy to recognise and remove if they come up in an unsuitable location. They grow really quickly, from a seedling to a full-sized 4m adult in one season, and they senesce just as quickly, becoming woody, leggy and brittle in the next season. Apparently they can be pruned when young to keep them dense, lush and green for longer,



but I reckon it's probably better to treat them as an annual, or biennial at most, and remove them once they have done their thing, to wait for the next batch to appear.

My current specimens (there are about a dozen individuals) have self-seeded into a gap outside my dining room window, on the northern side of the house. They germinated in late summer in 2018, were a metre tall by April, were 2m tall and flowering by October and were covered in ripe fruit by February. I haven't seen any birds eating the fruits or seeds, but my garden might be too isolated from suitable habitat for the finches and silvereyes to risk it. I expect the plants to begin falling over autumn, so I'll probably remove them and make room for the offspring.

**Sources:** Sharr – WA Plant Names and their Meanings.  
Elliot & Jones – Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 8.  
Corrick & Fuhrer – Wildflowers of Victoria.  
Costermans – Native Trees and Shrubs of South-eastern Australia.

## A well-behaved vine.

By Judy Hetherington

**W**hen we put up the gate separating the front and back gardens, between the house and the boundary fence, it was just post and wires. I knew I wanted a vine to create a "solid" looking fence even though the gate is in a shaded place. When we were at the Drouin Nursery, we saw a native *Hibbertia* with nice flowers that seemed to fit the bill. And it was defined as a non-aggressive vining or rambling plant. Our *Hibbertia dentata* is really looking good now with lovely yellow flowers to brighten up the "fence". It has taken about 6 years to cover a relatively small area, but that also means that Brian has also only had to snip off a few runners now and then.



I love the shape and colour of the buds and how the "young" flowers are a rose colour with petals shaped to a point. Mature flowers are 3cm across and a bright buttercup yellow with 5 dentate petals. The plant only grows to 1 -2 meters and can be grown on a garden bed to wander through the other plants without overpowering them. The leaves are elliptic to obovate, 3-9cm by 2-3cm wide with gentle, wide dentate leaves. The stems have a purple colour, similar to the buds.

The flowers occur in late winter to late spring and each flower will only last a few days. It can also be trimmed to grow in baskets. It likes well drained soil and can tolerate light frosts.

It can be propagated from seed but it's easier to wait for volunteers to sprout in the garden.



We had also put post and wire fences on the opposite side of the house to complete the fenced-in back garden. We planted *Muehlenbeckia complexa* on the longest stretch of fence as we wanted a shrub. It's looking good now but it is not well-behaved and Brian has to constantly trim it to keep it under control. On the other side of the drive, we planted *Pandorea pandorea*, which has nice flowers in the spring but again is not well-behaved, requiring regular trimming.

Thank goodness for our well-behaved vine!

- Family:** Dilleniaceae
- Distribution:** South-eastern Queensland to eastern Victoria in sheltered forests, rainforest margins and gullies.
- Common Name:** Trailing guinea flower; twining guinea flower
- Derivation of Name:** *Hibbertia*...after George Hibbert, a patron of botany.  
*dentata*.... "toothed", referring to the toothed-edged leaves.

Following on from Peter and Wendy Cox's article on *Dendrobium kingianum*, I have 2 photos to share. These were taken last October. The beautiful 2 toned pink *D. kingianum* which is about 6 years old now. This has been its best flowering. And the *Dendrobium* hybrid bought as a kerki 2 years ago at the Eltham Australian plant sale. Flowers are whitish with pale yellow and pink spots.



When I remember, I feed them with Neutrog Strike Back for Orchids so maybe this promoted flowering last spring. They are also in pots with an orchid bark potting mix. I am confused as to the name though. Was there a name change sometime ago? Is it *Dendrobium kingianum* or *Thelychiton kingianum*? [To try to answer Judy's question, I consulted Wikipedia and found the following: In

2002, Mark Clements and David Jones proposed reassignment of *Dendrobium kingianum* to the genus *Thelychiton* (as *Thelychiton kingianus*). The reassignment has not yet been accepted by the World Checklist of Selected Plant Families. Time and further research will determine whether *Thelychiton kingianus* is formally recognised Ed].

The photo at right is another October flowering orchid I believe to be *Chiloglottis valida* (Common Bird Orchid) For many years we have had a patch of these grow in a ring around the base of a large Stringy Bark. Haven't found them under any of our other gums so I try to keep an eye on this group and do some unobtrusive observing.



## 2020 Calendar photo spot - Sept. & Dec.

By Diane Aumann

The photos of Fox Banksia (*B. sphaerocarpa*) and Scarlet Banksia (*B. coccinea*) were both taken by Harold in his Drouin garden, probably 10 or so years ago. They were most likely bought at some plant sale or other. The Fox Banksia was quite vigorous and became a nice shrub of about 2.5 metres, but the Scarlet Banksia, while getting some reasonable growth and those impressive flowers, only lasted about 3 years. Harold really enjoyed his gardening; vegetable garden, orchard and of course, his native plants, and spent most of his time somewhere in it.



## *Dendrobium speciosum: The Rock Orchid*

By Peter and Wendy Cox

This popular native orchid is an epiphyte that grows on trees, stumps, fallen logs and occasionally on moss covered rocks. It is a large grower, forming large clumps with thick leaves up to a metre long. It bears a spray of large cream, white or yellow flowers. One of mine had 60 spikes last flowering. It grows on a typical epiphyte mix of twigs, bark, gumnuts and chunks of wood. It will die if put into soil! Soil rots the roots. It is magnificent in flower and well worth growing.



## What is it: Rough or Smooth Tree-fern?

By Warren Simpson

**D**uring our recent group excursion to Mount Worth State Park, some members were wondering how to tell Rough Tree-fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*) and Smooth Tree-fern (*Cyathea australis*) apart. In response to the persistent urging of the Newsletter Editor, I have produced the following.

It is really quite easy once you know what to look for, but difficult if you do not. There are a number of key differences to look out for; spore arrangement on leaves, roughness of the trunk and frond bases, where they grow, the presence of old, dead fronds around the stem and whether epiphytes are present or not.



First up, the spore arrangement. In the above photo, *Cyathea australis* is on the left and *Dicksonia antarctica* is on the right. The spores are positioned well within the margins of the pinnae on *Cyathea*, while on *Dicksonia*, they are cupped by the edges of pinnae.



At left, the *Cyathea australis* stem is showing persistent frond bases, which are rough to touch. Another feature is the rough knobby bits on the frond bases. Note also how clean the trunk is with no undershirt of old, dead fronds.

At right, the *Dicksonia antarctica* stem, is not as clean as *C. australis*, with little to no evidence of old frond bases. A lot of the reason for this is that the roots of *D. antarctica* grow on the outside of the stems and most of that brown "furry" looking material is actually new roots. This is also why it is possible to chop off the tops of *D. antarctica* and have them continue growing when replanted. It is also why the trunks of *D. antarctica* can be quite massive while *C. australis* trunks stay relatively slender.



In the comparison below between the lone *C.australis* in the foreground and a group of *D. antarctica* in the background, you can see that *C. australis* tends to grow in more open, brighter areas while *D. antarctica* favours south facing slopes and more shady gullies.



Below left is *Dicksonia* growing in the gully, note the old persistent fronds and thickness at base of trunk.

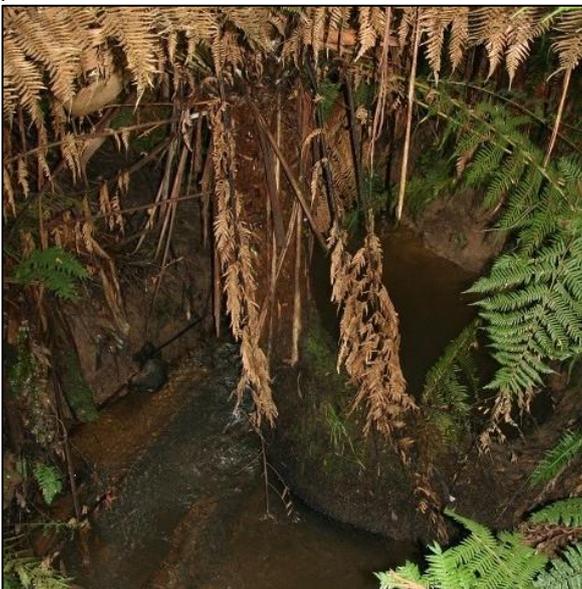
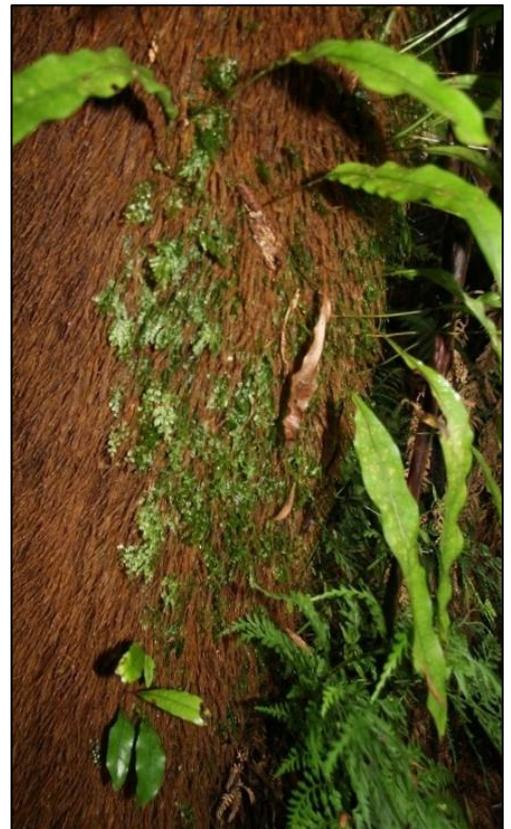


Photo at right is a *Dicksonia* trunk showing new roots with three different species of ferns, *Polyphlebium venosum*, the filmy fern growing on the trunk, *Microsorium diversifolium* or Kangaroo fern (two plants of different ages)



probably *Rhumora adiantiformis* on lower right. I cannot recall seeing an epiphyte on *C. australis*, nor can I recall it being mentioned as a regular occurrence by long term members of the former Fern Society of Victoria.

I hope this helps those who want to know the differences between these two species. Things can get a bit less clear when you move into other areas where other *Cyathea* species grow, so always refer to spore pattern first and trunks second.

### Ferns noted at Mount Worth State Park on 18/7/20

Microsorium pustulatum subsp. pustulatum	Kangaroo Fern
Dicksonia antarctica	Soft Tree Fern
Cyathea australis	Rough tree Fern
Blechnum nudum	Fishbone waterfern
Blechnum wattisii	Hard Water fern
Blechnum patersonii subsp. Patersonii	Strap Water Fern
Blechnum fluviale	Ray Water Fern
Polystichum proliferum	Mother Shield fern
Hymenophyllum australe	Austral Filmy Fern
Hymenophyllum flabellatum	Shiny Filmy Fern
Hymenophyllum cupressiforme	Common Filmy Fern
Histiopteris incisiva	Bats Wing Fern
Rumohra adiantiformis	Leathery shield fern
Polyphlebium venosum	Vined bristle fern
Hypolepis rugosa	Ruddy Ground fern
Pteridium esculentum	Bracken fern
Asplenium bulbiferum subsp. Gracillimum	Mother Spleenwort

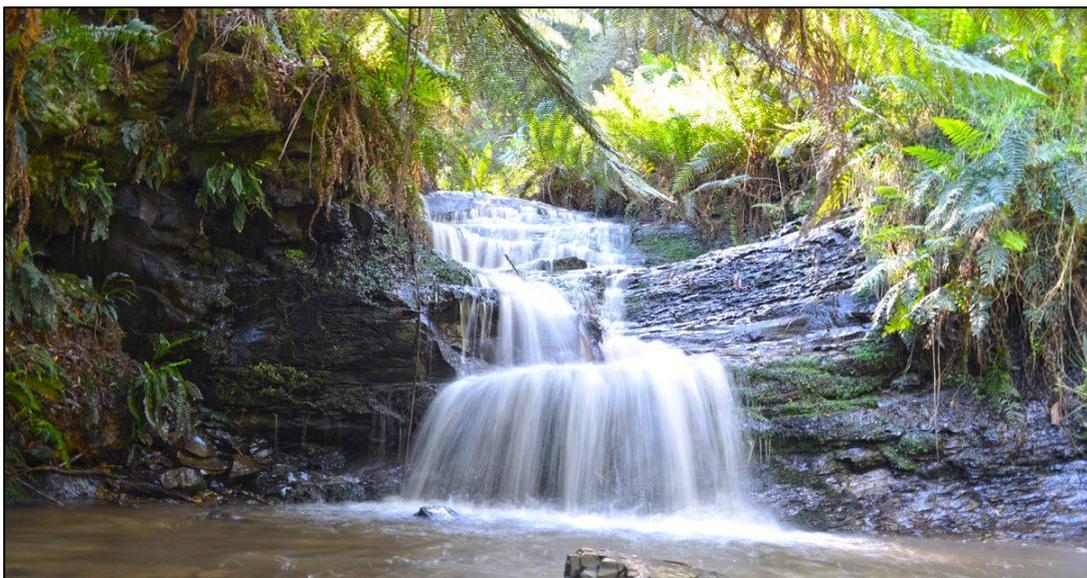
### Clubmoss Seen (Fern relative)

Selaginella kraussiana	Krauss's Spikemoss or Clubmoss
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### Ferns not see but recorded for the park.

Asplenium flabellifolium	Necklace fern
Calochlaena dubia	False Bracken
Blechnum chambersii	Lance water Fern
Cyathea x marcescens	Skirted Tree Fern
Diplazium australe	Austral lady Fern
Hypolepis muelleri	Harsh Ground Fern
Lastreopsis acuminata	Shiney Shield fern

Note: I regard the *Cyathea x marcescens* record as doubtful as it is a hybrid tree fern with one parent not present in the park or general area.



And for those who did not know, and that includes me, there IS a waterfall in Mount Worth state Park after all.

Image taken from <https://www.bushwalkingblog.com.au/moonlight-circuit-mount-worth-state-park/>

Posted by Neil Fahey.

## Coming events of interest

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

**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** **13<sup>th</sup> 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
Aug			<i>No formal meeting, no AGM</i>	
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	51							650
Mike	Boolarra	93	126	40	159	121	73							611
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	53							576

<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