

Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society
Latrobe Valley Group Inc.
No. A0045337C

Issue No. 315 – December 2022

Grevillea chrysophaea – Golden Grevillea

This Month

Event	Christmas break-up dinner.
Location	130 Tebb Terrace, Jeeralang Junction (Jackson's house).
Date	Saturday 10 December
Time	Arrive around 3PM

The Christmas break-up is a time to sit down to a meal together and have a chat. This year it is at the Jackson's to take advantage of the (partly) completed renovations. A wood fired BBQ is available, as are stove top, oven and microwave oven. BYO meat (or main dish to heat), beverages (tea and coffee supplied) and a salad or desert to share. A few camp chairs brought with you wouldn't go amiss if we can spend time sitting outside. Timing is flexible but we are aiming to have a late-ish afternoon/early evening meal.

In this issue:

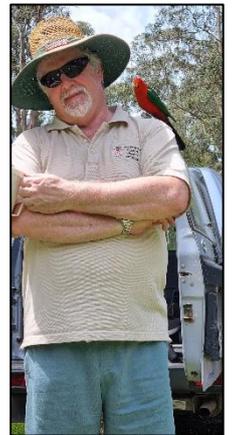
Page

2	Leader's Report – Jill Fidler
3	Editor's Notes – Col Jackson
4 – 5	Plants in my Garden – Mike Beamish
6 – 7	2022 Calendar Spot -December – Judy Hetherington
8 – 11	Galivanting with orchids... – Mike Beamish
11	Gynea Lilies flowering in Churchill – Ray Hodges
12	Coming events of interest.
13	APS Latrobe Valley Group Calendar
13	Rainfall registration charts

The sun is shining at last and only 12 days till summer as I write this. Summer is predicted to be wetter than usual, although sometimes it is hard to remember what is 'usual'. The wet spring has made me realise just how many hours I normally spend watering. Not too sure what I have done with those hours! I tell everyone I don't have a garden, but I have been entrusted with helping to look after the garden at Airlie Bank Homestead in Morwell, currently the home of Latrobe Valley U3A. About 18 months ago, the planting of annuals was replaced with natives. We have managed to combine these successfully with established trees and older shrubs and roses. Thanks partly to the abundant rain the results are rewarding and resulting maintenance hours reduced. No doubt many of you will also have 'combined' gardens, including both natives and exotics. Early in the year I talked about 'National Eucalypt Day'. The day will be celebrated again next year on March 23rd 2023. Voting will open in February, as will the photo competition. Keep an eye on the website – eucalyptus.org.au – which also displays spectacular photos from previous competitions.

For my 'Odd Spot' this month, amidst the doom and gloom of vanishing species, some good news. The orange-bellied parrot is defying the odds. In 2016 only 17 birds made it back to their Tasmanian home after the winter migration to the mainland, including only 4 females. For the third year running now, more than 50 are expected back at Melaleuca in Tasmania's Southwest Wilderness in mid-December. Researchers at a Tasmanian government sponsored program carried out in a specially designed aviary near Hobart, release about 30 adults in the spring and 50 juveniles in the summer/autumn to bolster the migration flock. Work is under way on a transmitter small enough to safely attach to the birds to track them during migration. This will help to reveal where so many are killed while on the mainland. At least 500 are needed before success can be announced but the researchers are quietly confident.

We were lucky with the weather on our latest excursion to the Bunyip State Park. Julie from Peppermint Ridge Farm led us on a walk through the beautiful bush of the Mortimer picnic ground and identified several edible indigenous plants. Below are a few photos Mike contributed. We were also entertained by more than a dozen species of local birds. Particularly, a very tame King parrot, who was fascinated by Mike [*the bird whisperer. Ed.*] and almost sat on his shoulder, a perfect photo opportunity. For our final meeting, Colin and Mary have generously invited us to their place for an early Christmas celebration. Hope to see you all there, Jill Fidler



Orb weaving spider



Blue Dampiera



Common Bird Orchid

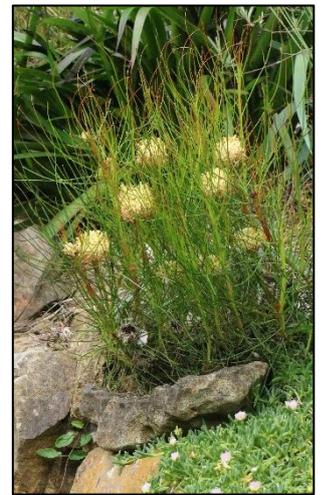
Here we are with our last newsletter for 2022. It is four years now since I took over the newsletter editor's role and it has been some time since I have made any radical changes. I feel it is time for a review of the format of the newsletter, so I am asking you for your opinions and advise.

Firstly, are you happy with the content. Do you want the long articles that served to keep us in contact and informed through the lockdowns of Covid or would you prefer a much briefer content just focussing on what events are coming? Keep in mind that the articles need to be written and I am relying on you members to contribute these as a steady trickle. Next, are you happy with the layout? The OCD part of me likes to start articles on a new page and fit them into full pages where I can, generally enlarging or shrinking photos to achieve this. If I can't reasonably fill a page with an article, I try to use the shorter items (events calendar, rainfall charts, calendar spot, general interest photo) as a means of rounding out to a full page. This does mean those regular short items tend to be at random places in the newsletter.

Please have a think about this and let me know your opinions. In this email world it seems we are getting flooded with information, so I want to make sure our newsletter is customised to what people really want. And to round up this subject, I want to sincerely thank all who have contributed articles to the newsletter this year.

With the threat of a December meeting at our house and the major construction works coming to a completion, I have made time for some work in the garden. The Clematis vines that had flowered so nicely around the garden were starting to turn to seed, something I didn't want. Several hours were spent pulling those vines out of shrubs, digging out the smaller ones and cutting and poisoning the stumps of the larger ones. I removed a total of 16 from the garden that day and have since removed another 5 sneaky ones that must have been hiding the first day. Weeding has been a priority, with many buckets going into my 'weed tea' drums.

A couple of interesting plants in the garden now are *Petrophile longifolia* (above) and *Isopogon anemonifolius* (below). The *Petrophile* was bought at a plant sale and the *Isopogon* was scrounged as a cutting. Both have been in the soil for many years and have flowered before but have chosen this year to really shine.



Species: *Bauera rubioides*.

Family: Cunoniaceae.

Derivation:

Bauera: Named after the Austrian botanical illustrators, brothers Ferdinand (1760-1826) and Franz (1758-1840) Bauer.

rubioides: Named after the Genus *Rubia* (the Madders), with the suffix *-oides*, meaning like.

Common Name: River Dog Rose, Wiry Bauera.

Distribution: Scattered but locally common in damp heathland and heathy forest in southern Victoria and also occurs in Qld, NSW, SA and Tasmania.

Description: A scrambling, wiry or tangled shrub to about 2m tall, with narrowly elliptic, hairy leaflets to 15mm long and 5mm wide, usually with toothed margins. Flowers appear at any time, with a flush in spring and early summer and are pink or white, with between 5 and 8 petals and up to 20mm wide.

Opinion: I have two of these. One is self-sown on my northern nature strip and is a replica of the plants that are common in the Boolarra Bush a few hundred metres away. ►



Mine is virtually prostrate, as it initially established itself on bare ground (if my memory is correct, this is the second plant to self-seed in this spot, the first one died but obviously dropped a seed before it did) and hasn't yet reached its neighbours for any scrambling support. It gets a lot of sun during the middle of the day and is currently (October) going berserk and flowering madly, its pale pink and white flowers just about obscuring the foliage.

My other plant was found in a nursery at Inverloch, didn't have a label on it and had very large, deep pink flowers, but was obviously a River Dog Rose. I planted it in the northern bed on the block in pretty heavy shade where it has survived but hasn't yet put on much growth and also hasn't flowered to the same degree. Time will tell, I suppose, if it will prosper in this location, but I reckon it might be wise to take a cutting or two (if I can find enough material) just in case it decides the conditions don't suit it.

Looking at my records, I've tried heaps of times to get cuttings to strike and I think I'm successful in that regard, but it's the next part of the process that seems to be letting me down. Potting up the cuttings doesn't seem to be working, as a few months later I'm recording only dead sticks in the pots. I'll keep trying, but perhaps I shouldn't bother and just keep my eye out for seedlings.

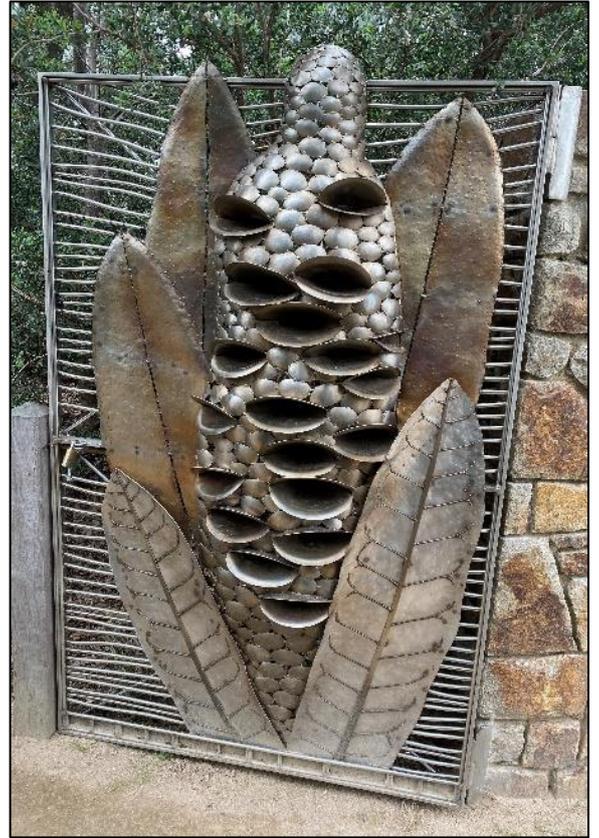
Sources: Corrick & Fuhrer – Wildflowers of Victoria
Elliot & Jones – Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 2
Online – Google and VicFlora: Flora of Victoria.

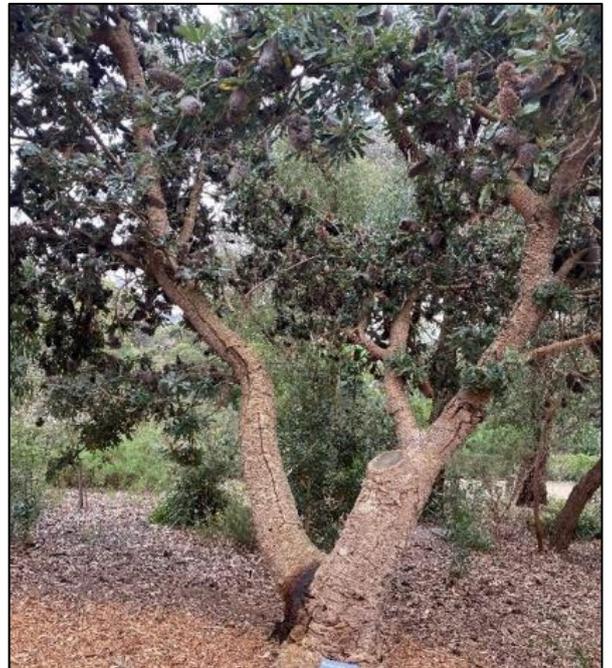


2022 Calendar Spot – December

By Judy Hetherington

In October 2020, when Metro was locked down and Regional Victoria was not, Brian was able to schedule in cataract surgery at Frankston Private Hospital. As some of you know, this is a two-step process: first one eye and then the other. Clutching the hospital papers just in case we got stopped by police asking why we were in Metro; the drive down there was uneventful. Brian had the easy part: go into the hospital and getting taken care of. My part was harder: I had to kill 4 hours of waiting in the car as I couldn't go inside any buildings. Fortunately, exercising was allowed, so I started out. At the first corner down, I saw the beautiful gate to the George Pentland Botanic Gardens. There are actually two gates into the gardens, and each has a Banksia sculpture. The park is dedicated to preserving an area of coastal plains within the City of Frankston. Wandering the gardens was a great way to kill time while Brian was inside the hospital. Also, it had the only close public toilet I found on that first trip. When we came back for Brian's eye surgery, I knew how I was going to amuse myself! ▶





[With the change to the format of the calendar, I will not be pestering you for the regular 'calendar photo blurbs' next year, so Judy's article here is a great note to finish on. However, if one of your photos is in the new calendar and you feel the urge to talk about it, please don't be scared to tap out a short article. Editor].

Gallivanting with orchids...

By Mike Beamish

I was going to write a short update on the results of our travels around the extremities of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) at the end of September but realised I haven't yet reported on the start of it all, back in the middle of winter. So, for any of it to make sense, you'll need the full story, albeit in abbreviated form...

With the hangover of the pandemic still causing uncertainties with our travel plans, Cathy and I decided to donate some time to some threatened species recovery work on rare orchids in south-eastern NSW, a few kilometres north of the Murray River at Corowa and Albury, organised through the Australasian Native Orchid Society (ANOS Vic) in conjunction with various NSW government departments, Save Our Species (SOS) networks and the Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne (RBGC) Orchid Conservation team, who grew the orchids. We ended up spending a fortnight on our knees planting orchids, with our team (1



of 3) planting over half of the 6000 orchids in 9 half-days, leaving plenty of time for wandering around birdwatching and looking for any plants in flower, not many at that time of year. Consequently, we were able to look around some areas that aren't normally accessible to the public and lo-and-behold, we found a "lost" population of a rare orchid (much rarer than the 3 species of orchids we were planting!), known as Blotched Golden Moths (*Diuris fucosa*). These were in flower in late July, about 6 weeks ahead of any other species of Moth Orchid.

In between planting weeks, we had a few days to fill in, so we joined in with some orchid enthusiasts from both NSW and Victoria and some local Field Nats, who were invited by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) to search for another rare orchid, the Plains Rustyhood (*Pterostylis pedina*). Consequently, we were able to access areas in Oolambeyan NP, near Hay, that are closed to public

access. Alas, we didn't find what we were looking for there, but then we were invited further west to Yanga NP near Balranald to help out in a survey of a known population of the Rustyhood. Success! No flowers at that time of year, but we found hundreds of rosettes, some with buds forming, and increased the boundaries of the area in which they grow. Cathy originally had doubts that we would



find the exercise (looking for leaves on a barren saltbush plain) in any way entertaining, but

we were pleasantly surprised how the time flew, no doubt helped by the fact that we were able to be distracted by other plants and critters without censure by our companions.

Forward a couple of months, the APS Victoria COM meeting was advertised for a weekend in Swan Hill at the end of September. Normally, we wouldn't be overly interested in another of these, been there, done that kind of thing, but our usual representatives to these meetings were unavailable for this one, so we had a thought! Balranald is only about 100km, an hour's drive, north of Swan Hill, so why not make a trip of it and revisit some of the places we breezed through back in July? I had about 10 days available between work commitments, so off we went.

We started off with a return visit to Kooyoorra State Park, at the Melville Caves Campground, free, no bookings required, but not particularly flat sites, sealed road access, dogs allowed on leash (though some, conveniently for them, overlook that requirement) and a new, reasonably clean and maintained drop dunny amongst picnic tables and fireplaces (BYO wood, something else conveniently overlooked by some), birds and wildlife abounding (Western Grey Kangaroos, at their eastern-most range extremity). Very popular with grey nomads most days and everybody



else during school holidays, which is of course when we were there! We spent our 3 days wandering about the granite boulders looking for plants, the Wallowa (or Wirilda) Wattles (*Acacia euthycarpa*) were in full, golden bloom and the Snowy Mint-bushes (*Prostanthera nivea*) were just starting.



Cathy did it again, of course! We had found a number of common species of orchids which I was busily recording, when she called me over to look at another group of orchids she had found. It was a large colony (hundreds of plants over several square metres) of an entirely green (usually brown and green) Dainty Bird (or Wasp) Orchid (*Chiloglottis trapeziformis*), only a couple of hundred metres from the campground. We didn't think anything of it at first, as it is a relatively common orchid around the State and continued on our way. But a few days later I sent our observations through to the Terrestrial Study Group of ANOS Victoria and started to get some very excited enquiries back from the

author of the 'Orchids of Kooyoorra SP' field guide book and the convener of the Friends of Kooyoorra SP Group. Turns out this is the first record of this orchid in the Park and the nearest previous record was of a colony on private property just outside the northern boundary that wasn't looked after and hasn't flowered for nearly two decades.

Our next destination was Yanga NP near Balranald and a couple of hours driving, one to Swan Hill and the other beyond, found us looking at a road closed sign at the entrance to the Willows Campground, about 20km east of Balranald. This was before the current dramas of wet weather and flooding across large areas of NSW and Victoria, so we were a bit disappointed that our only option was the caravan park in town rather than the peace and quiet out in the National Park. The caravan park is nice enough, but its position right next to the Sturt Highway meant nights of listening to the trucks roaring by at regular intervals. And it was pretty crowded, as a lot of other school holiday travellers were in a similar position of not being able to get out to the bush camping sites. But it was only for a couple of nights and our days were out in the NP, walking around looking for whatever caught our eye. We walked about 3km or so back into the Plains Rustyhood site because 1) we didn't have a key to the gate (although we might have been able to get one if we'd



asked) and 2) we were in the motorhome, not the 4WD, the tracks were wet and you just don't drive on wet, dirt tracks in that part of the country, all you will achieve is track destruction or vehicle damage/bogging or both. We found what we were looking for sooner than expected, so took our photos and walked/slipped/slithered our way back out again. Result - Plains Rustyhood flowering in September, about six weeks earlier than the expected time in mid-November, probably due to the unusually damp winter in that part of the world.

The rest of the trip was a bit of an anti-climax. We went back to Swan Hill and stayed amongst the masses in the Riverside CP (\$60/night, 3 nights minimum, school holiday rip-off), I went to the COM meeting while Cathy toured the sights, we did the touristy Pioneer Village stuff, we visited a couple of really excellent, large, native gardens in really nice weather. We were going to revisit Terrick Terrick NP on the way home, but that was the start of the latest bout of flood-watches, it began pouring down, so we called it a holiday and came home a couple of days early. All of our observations are now up on iNaturalist, have a look, and Cathy's photo of the Rustyhood is now the only photo of that species on the Atlas of Living Australia.

Gynea Lilies flowering in Churchill

By Ray Hodges

A year or so ago we noticed a Gynea lily on the pathway from the Churchill shopping centre over to the University. This year, there is a lovely display of two in flower in the garden bed at the Churchill petrol station (see pictures). This wet year seems to have been an ideal season of many native flowers – as mentioned in October, we saw surprisingly plentiful greenhood orchids in September. Then after finding a single bird orchid on the Mt Cannibal walk in July, our recent November 2022 visit to the Bunyip state park also had these in abundance.





Coming events of interest

Note: Please check the Vic APS website for cancellations before attending.,

25 & 26 March 2023 - Cranbourne Friends RBGV Autumn Plant Sale. 10 am to 4 pm. Wide range of plants, plant list available one week before sale. Free entry. Website: rbgfrienscranbourne.org.au

29 March to 2 April 2023 – Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS), Carlton Gardens and Royal Exhibition Building. Website: <https://melbflowershow.com.au>.

1 April 2023 – APS Geelong **Australian Native Plant Sale**, 'Wirrawilla', Lovely Banks. 8.30 am to 4.00 pm.

22 April 2023 - APS Yarra Yarra Autumn Plant Sale, Eltham Community & Reception Centre, Eltham. 10 am – 4 pm.

29 April 2023 - APS Mornington Peninsula Plant Sale. 10 am to 3 pm. The Briars, Mt Martha.

13 May 2023 – APS Melton and Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale. 9am to 1pm. The venue is expected to be St Andrews Uniting Church at Bacchus Marsh, to be confirmed

24 & 25 June 2023 – APS Ballarat Winter Flower Show. Flower show, plant sales etc. Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Gilles Street, Ballarat. 10 am – 4 pm.

2 September 2023 – APS Cardinia Region Group Plant Sale at Acoonah Park, Princes Hwy, Berwick, from 9 am to 3 pm. To be located in the undercover fruit and vegetable market area.

9 & 10 September 2023 – APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo. Eltham Community & Reception Centre, 801 Main Road Eltham. 10.00 am - 4.00 pm both days.

16 & 17 September 2023 – Angair Wildflower Show (admin@angair.org.au – Nat Utmar, Admin, 5263 1085

23 & 24 September 2023 – APS Bendigo Flower Show, Victory College, Kairn Road, Strathdale (Bendigo).

23 & 24 September 2023 – APS Grampians host APS Vic September COMM. To be confirmed.

30 September & 1 October 2023 – APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall.

7 October 2023 – APS Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase, Echuca Masonic Lodge Hall, 426 High Street, Echuca. 9 am to 4 pm. Flower show, native plant sales, basket weaving display, floral art and painting sales.

28 & 29 October 2023 - APS Ballarat Spring Flower Show. Flower show, plant sales etc. Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Gilles Street, Ballarat. 10 am – 4 pm. (to be confirmed)

30 September to 4 October, 2024 – ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference hosted by APS Victoria in Melbourne.

2024 – ANPSA 2024 hosted by APS Victoria in Melbourne.

2022 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar

Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
Dec	Sat	10	<i>Christmas Break-up at the Jackson's house.</i>	<i>3PM</i>

We are looking for ideas for next year's meetings. Please give some thought to what you would like to see as a guest speaker, garden visit, a trip, or any other ideas you have for our meeting subjects.

Rainfall for 2021 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	92	57	78	88	65	143	73	83	128	180	113	28	1125
Brian	Drouin (east)	83	58	80	64	68	134	87	44	174	130	106	26	1054
Carolyn	Yarragon	79	30	60	65	75	117	73	102	151	93	88	20	951
Wayne	Tanjil South	108	37	89	77	175	195	90	95	207	167	112	64	1416
Peter	Mirboo North	92	53	107	81	101	274	88	78	170	87	96	45	1272
Judy	Moe South	97	25	89	79	75	175	79	83	197	101	93	37	1130
Mike	Boolarra	95	43	81	66	84	181	67	92	186	88	83	35	1098
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	79	35	98	63	71	266	56	114	120	136	117	26	1178
John	Traralgon South	83	16	135	35	26	229	58	68	91	75	68	33	915

Rainfall for 2022 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	67	30	81	94	60	170	90	198	60	172			1020
Brian	Drouin (east)	74	11	76	86	75	145	77	199	66	199			1008
Carolyn	Yarragon	107	5	55	68	58	191	97	163	64	144			950
Wayne	Tanjil South	83	15	63	98	107	130							496
Peter	Mirboo North	62	8	67	68	50	150	88	189	73	136			891
Judy	Moe South	73	13	64	55	93	209	72	165	67				811
Mike	Boolarra	72	6	74	60	54	162	69	166	66	119			846
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	68	11	85	75	46	164	72	161	62	133			875
John	Traralgon South	88	10	31	56	28	175							

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

Leader:	Jill Fidler	0407871603	jillsgarden71@gmail.com
Deputy-leader:	Jan Workman	0429029279	jantw@y7mail.com
Secretary:	Cathy Beamish	0447452755	cathy.beamish@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Mike Beamish	0447452755	mcandcjb@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor:	Col Jackson	0429095527	coljackson57@hotmail.com
Website:	John Stephens	0439755013	john.stephens9@bigpond.com
Librarian:	Pamela Cox	0429194733	theroseglen@yahoo.com.au
Publicity	Delma Hodges	0408398385	rj3dh2@aussiebb.com.au



Golden Grevillea
Grevillea chrysophaea

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