Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society
Latrobe Valley Group Inc.
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Grevillea chrysophaea – Golden Grevillea

This Month

Event	A day trip to Cranbourne Botanic Gardens and CBG Friends' plant sale.
Location	Meeting at the Gardens entrance.
Date	Saturday 23 March
Time	10:00 AM for the plant sale, otherwise meeting at the entrance at 11:00 AM for a walk around the gardens.

Cranbourne Botanic Gardens are always a spectacular visit, with their interpretations of Australian landscapes. The plant sale opens at 10:00 and the early bird gets the best plants. Consider calling a friend (or two) to carpool and we will meet at the entrance at about 11 AM (once we have taken our booty back to the cars). BYO picnic lunch or food can be bought at the café. Note: the café can be very busy.

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Leader's Report

By Jan Workman

Doris, another friend and I attended the field trip at Tarra Bulga National Park and were surprised that by 10:45 no one else had arrived. We waited at the Bulga car park. I rang Col and left a message that no one else had arrived.

We decided to walk to the suspension bridge and later walked back to the car park via the fern gully. Lots of tracks had been closed due to recent flooding rains.

We had a picnic lunch where a stunning Crimson Rosella came and joined us.

We then visited the information centre viewing lots of historical photos and artefacts that were on display. Doris was flabbergasted that no other members had attended saying; "this is the first time that only 2 members had come to a field trip since inception". After an enjoyable time, we departed Tara Bulga NP at 2pm and headed home.

After walking in my front door, the phone rings and Col is returning my call. He just got service on his phone and noticed a missed call from me. Col then explained to me that the field trip started at Tarra Valley car park, and we had gone to Bulga Park car park.

About 10 members went on the field trip after all!

Better luck next time!

In fact, from now on I'm going to note exactly where a field trip starts and will be getting GPS coordinates if necessary.

I am currently house sitting at Shallow Bay in NSW and one of my jobs is to bottle feed Olive twice a day.

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2024 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar				
Month	**Day**	**Date**	**Activity**	**Time**
Mar	Sat	23	Day trip to Cranbourne Botanic Garden and CBG Friends' plant sale.	Sale 10:00 Meet 11:00
April	Sat	20	Day trip to Glen Nayook	10:00
May	Thu	9	Slide presentation by Mike at The Rose Garden meeting room, Morwell.	1:30 PM

Editor's Notes

By Col Jackson

The month started quite happily. Despite the dire warnings of an El Nino summer, we'd had regular rain, the grass was green, and the plants were growing and flowering. My River Lily (*Crinum pedunculatum*) did its summer thing and burst into flower, all delicate and clean. Then El Nino somehow crept up and pounced on the garden while I was looking the other way. I had realised that we hadn't had much rain for a little while but didn't worry and didn't bother checking recently planted treasures. Suddenly I realised that my *Epacris longiflora* (which had been purchased for a rather exorbitant sum of money) was looking very dry and crusty. I had planted it in early spring, in semi-shade, and at the base of a large rock to keep the soil moist and cool: it should have been perfect. But it suddenly wasn't, it was dead! I watered and watered in the hopes of reviving it but alas, I was much too late. At least that prompted a run of checking and watering other recently installed plants. A *Chamelaucium uncinatum* Purple Pride that had been in the ground for several years has also succumbed; I would have thought it was established enough and resistant enough to dry that it was out of the danger zone by now. I have even been thinking of contributing to Daryl's 'Plants that have died in my garden' series but decided that they all just looked like bare, brown sticks and wouldn't be that interesting anyway. Bah! Who'd want to be a gardener!

Most of the stuff that hasn't died has decided it's a great time NOT to flower, so the garden is a bit bare of the pretty stuff. Leptospermum 'Starry Night' is managing to punch out a few last flowers, while *Phragmites australis* is just starting with its tall, feathery flower stems. The Paper Daisies (*Xerochrysum bracteatum*) that I planted near the clothesline to temporarily fill a space left after a removal have done their job exceedingly well, filling about two square metres and producing literally hundreds of bright yellow flowers. And lastly, one of my current favourites is *Leucochrysum albicans*. This cute little mini version of the larger paper daisies is difficult to keep alive for more than one year but can be grown easily enough from seed. I love the way it provides a splash of yellow amongst the Scaevolas and Brachyscombes without overpowering them in size.

Plants in my Garden 205

By Mike Beamish

Species: *Pterostylis coccina*.

Family: Orchidaceae.

Derivation:

Pterostylis: From Greek, *pteron*, meaning "wing", and *stylos*, meaning "pillar, pole or column" and referring to the broad wings found on the upper part of the column in this genus of orchids.

coccina: From Latin, *coccineus*, meaning 'scarlet'.

Common Name: Scarlet Greenhood.

Distribution: In the ranges from around Suggan Buggan in far north-eastern Victoria, through the ACT to about Mt Kaputar in NSW, generally above 600m in altitude.

Description: Non-flowering plants form a basal rosette of leaves to 30mm long by 15mm wide. Flowering plants don't form a rosette, just a stem to 25cm tall holding a single hooded flower about 30mm in length with dorsal and lateral sepal free-points extending 2 or 3cm further. The labellum is visible just above and extending through the sinus (the gap at the front of

the hood). Flowers can be green/brown/red and white striped and occur from January to April in their subalpine environment.

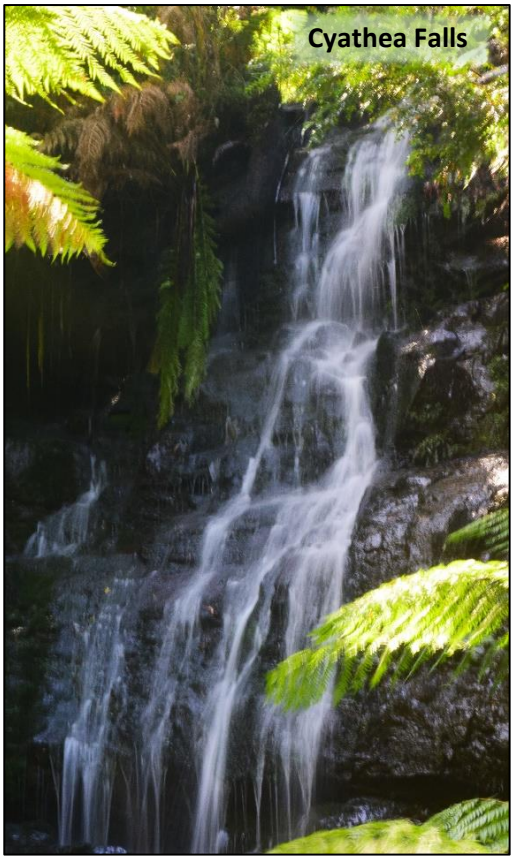
Opinion: As you can see, my pot is full of non-flowering plants (all the leaves) with only about a dozen in flower or budding up. This shot was 2021, in 2022 there were just as many leaves but only half-a-dozen flowers and this year, only 4 flowers. This species always has a fair proportion of non-flowering plants, but I think the trend is indicating that I need to empty the pot in the coming dormant period and thin out the tubers into another 3 or 4 pots. I'm only a beginner when it comes to growing orchids, so it always worries me when it comes to disturbing the plants. Generally, the colony-forming greenhoods like this species are easy to grow, but the main concerns are keeping the snails and bugs at bay and getting the watering right. Keeping the mix too damp over the warmer months can result in all your tubers rotting, but not watering enough may cause the tubers to desiccate. And disturbing the mix is the most likely time to upset the plants or unwittingly introduce pathogens. Oh, the stress!

Sources: Elliot & Jones - Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 8.
Backhouse - Guides to Native Orchids of Victoria and NSW/ACT.
Jones - Native Orchids of Australia, 3rd Edition (as *Diplodium coccinum*)

Tarra Bulga National Park visit

By Mike Beamish

Colin rang on Saturday (10th) evening to compare notes and arrange some car-pooling, he would be on his own for the day as Mary was tied up with family influx preparations. We duly arrived at Tebb Terrace about 9.30am the next day, piled all the gear into the Prado and headed off up the hill on Jumbuk Road. It was a little pot-holey in places, needed some drain-clearing in others, but generally was in reasonable nick. Sad to see the damage still going on with logging in the pseudo-plantations in the Strzeleckis, seems they're not considered part of the ban on native forest logging. Happy to see all the wallabies though, they're obviously doing well in the areas away from the logging coupes - we must have startled at least 2 dozen off the road between the end of the bitumen at O'Reilly's Hill Road and the start of the bitumen at the intersection of Grand Ridge and Tarra Valley Roads. Other wildlife - a few Crimson Rosellas flying across or along the road easements and a single Lyrebird with a magnificent tail crossed the road in front of us, not far above the Tarra Valley carpark. No traffic on the unsealed bits, only a couple of cars on the really narrow, winding sealed strip down from the Grand Ridge.►


Cyathea Falls

Ghost Fungus *Omphalotus nidiformis*

We arrived at the meeting point a few minutes before time to find Brian and Judy already there, parked in the shade as the sun already had a substantial bite. We exchanged pleasantries for a while as we waited for any more attendees to show up, but the Simpson family were the only ones to make an appearance. We later learnt that a couple of others had not read their newsletters sufficiently and had gone to the wrong meeting point at the NP Visitor's Centre at Balook, finding themselves on their own. Attempts to contact us failed, there is no phone reception in Tarra Valley!

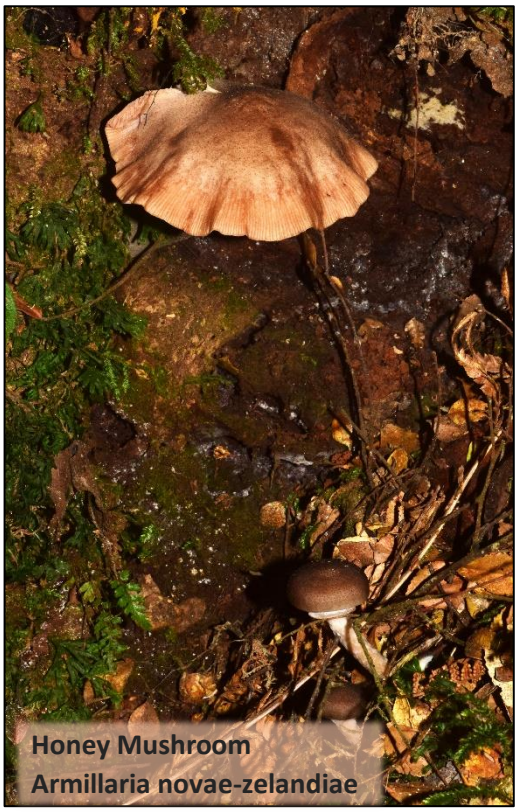
Our first leech was picked up in the carpark before we started walking, by me, foolishly wandering onto the lush verges of the carpark while getting gear out of the car. Luckily, the tiny beastie hadn't had time to get the fangs in and was plucked and flicked back into the shrubbery with no hesitation. Then followed a few minutes of sock-tucking and repellent-spraying by the crew, before heading bush. The difference in temperature (and humidity) between the carpark and the track in the gully was most noticeable and pleasant. Even with the dry weather recently, there was still plenty of water in the creeks and in places the track itself was quite damp, with water seeping out of the earthen banks. It's a lovely place, ferns everywhere, scattered fungi in the nooks and crannies, bird calls ringing out amongst the Mountain Ash (Black Cockatoos, Rosellas, Wrens, Thornbills, no Lyrebirds singing though), fairies and sprites hiding in the ancient Beeches and the trickle of water in the gullies.

The target was Cyathea Falls, which was supposed to be accessible via a loop track a few hundred metres in length, so it was disappointing to discover the eastern half of the loop was closed due to the disrepair of the track. It seems we were lucky the whole thing wasn't closed, as the western half wasn't in good condition►

Dog Vomit Slime Mold - *Fuligo septica*

Orange pore fungus - *Favolaschia claudopus*

either, with holes and washouts along the track, uprooted trees making the surface rough and slippery and wobbly bridges in need of maintenance. An energetic young chap we met on the track decided on a spot of civil disobedience and walked through the closed section anyway, reporting that in his opinion it was no worse than the open section and would take very little time and effort to bring it back up to scratch.Back at the cars, we decided to have lunch before heading up to the Visitor's Centre for a stroll around the Bulga Park section. Brian and Judy called it a day at this point and headed down Tarra Valley towards Yarram. The rest of us braved the narrow road, made it to the Grand Ridge without collecting any Sunday drivers as hood ornaments and found a spot in the shade, as it was quite a bit warmer on top of the ridge. Not all of us were keen on another walk, so a couple stayed behind to check out the VC while the rest trotted off. As it turned out, this section of the Park is in a similar condition to the Tarra Valley section, with tracks closed due to "storm damage", which as far as we could tell translates to lack of maintenance, and the open tracks also needing urgent attention. It only took us an hour or so to trundle around the paths available to us, the swing bridge was as picturesque as ever, the tree ferns majestic, the filmy ferns on the tree fern trunks so delicate, the bells of *Fieldia australis* just about the only flowers to be seen (apart from weeds). A feed of blackberries was moreish, but the little yellow ripe fruits of the Austral Mulberry *Hedycarya angustifolia* were awful; they might not be poisonous, but they're certainly not human food, despite their common name and appearance. The scent of the Balm Mintbush *Prostanthera melissifolia*, wafting on the warm afternoon breeze as we crossed the hill back to the cars, cleared out the sinuses nicely. Once we had tracked down all the strays and had our end-of-session discussions, it was time to hit the road.


Honey Mushroom
Armillaria novae-zelandiae

Fieldia australis

Delicate Garden Skink *Lampropholis delicata*

Coming events of interest

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

23 & 24 March 2024 - Cranbourne Friends RBGV Autumn Plant Sale. 10 am to 4 pm. Wide range of plants, plant list available one week before sale. Website: rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

6 & 7 April 2024 – APS Wangaratta take part in Off-Grid Living Festival & Campout, Chiltern Racecourse & Recreation Reserve, NE Victoria. Providing information about Australian plants – growing, maintenance, suitability and also selling plants which we have propagated ourselves.

13 April 2024 – APS Geelong Australian Native Plant Sale, 'Wirrawilla', Lovely Banks. 8.30 am to 4.00 pm.

20th April 2024 - APS Yarra Yarra Autumn plant sale. Eltham Community and Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham. 10am-4pm

14 & 15 September 2024 APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo. Eltham Community and Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham. 10am - 4pm

5 September 2024 – Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar. Further details to follow.

21 & 22 September 2024 – APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall.

21 & 22 September 2024 – Angair Wildflower Show & Art Show, Anglesea Memorial Hall, McMillan Street, Anglesea. 10 am to 4 pm. Wildflower display, indigenous plant sales, art show and painting sales.

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

19 & 20 October 2024 - Cranbourne Friends RBGV Spring Plant Sale. 10 am to 4 pm. Wide range of plants, plant list available one week before sale. Website: rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Dianella berries with spider web – Jackson garden

Rainfall for 2023 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	21	42	101	112	114	102	41	66	66	177	80	157	1078
Brian	Drouin (east)	22	44	110	93	118	101	38	70	68	184	83	136	1067
Warren	Yarragon	49	35	80	69	119	138	36	71	78	184	74	85	1018
Wayne	Tanjil South	25	43	100	77	131	126	55	74	59	195	106	136	1127
Peter	Mirboo North	35	57	113	96	132	94	32	59	57	205	110	86	1076
Judy	Moe South	26	33	80	66	126	101	86	83	78	193	90	124	1086
Mike	Boolarra	20	43	114	61	113	101	44	62	55	182	60	92	946
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	24	36	94	65	122	91	26	51	58	200	94	105	964

Rainfall for 2024 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	135												135
Brian	Drouin (east)	121												121
Warren	Yarragon	97												97
Wayne	Tanjil South													0
Peter	Mirboo North													0
Judy	Moe South	100												100
Mike	Boolarra	89												89
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	71												71

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