

Golden

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

Issue No. 334 – September 2024

Grevillea chrysophaea – Golden Grevillea

This Month

Event	A talk and slide show on Canberra Botanic Garden by Warren Simpson.
Location	The Morwell Rose Garden meeting room adjacent to the Senior Citizens Centre at 2-4 Maryvale Crescent, Morwell
Date	Friday September 13
Time	2:00 PM

Many of you will have visited the Canberra Botanic Garden at some stage so will already know what an interesting place it is. Warren is a fan and has put together a slide show of some of his favourites.

There is ample parking available on the nearby roadsides, please leave the car park adjacent for the people in the retirement village.

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Leader's Report

By Jan Workman

Welcome to the 2024 - 2025 APS year and congratulations to all executive members who stepped up to take on roles.

At last, the sun is shining, the winter clouds have parted and in my area the abundance of yellow (wattles) and red (bottle brushes) are heralding the onset of spring. I have finally recovered from my recent state of 'unwellness' and am back to getting out and about and looking forward to what the next 12 months of APS will bring. I am back on my electric scooter and using the VLine to get out and about in Melbourne and exploring other towns along the Traralgon - Southern Cross line. I have a seat on my scooter and a friend told me that she read that this mode of transport is very good for older people to improve balance and wellbeing...It certainly works for me.



2024 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar

Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
September	Friday	13	A slide show and talk on Canberra Botanic Garden by Warren Simpson at the Rose Garden meeting rooms in Morwell.	2:00PM
October	Fri-Mon	25-28	A trip to Buchan, staying 3 nights at Homeleigh and exploring the surrounding area. Let Mike know if you are coming.	
November	Thursday	14	Christmas Break-up. We have a booking at the Warragul Country Club for a meal in the Bistro area. We will need to confirm numbers by the 31 st of October.	12 noon

I can hardly believe we are one month on from the last newsletter. It seems I have been gardening nonstop for the whole month. Just when you need the garden to cooperate (ie. important visit coming up) things seem to start going wrong. A large shrub (approximately 3 metres high by 2 metres wide) of *Leionema coxii* had been slowly dying back but finally decided to pack it in completely. The removal of this has left a large hole in the garden that I'm not sure what to do with at this stage. And to top that off a thicket of *Allocasurina crassa* have all succumbed to wet soil and gravity and toppled over onto other shrubs. This is a Tasmanian native, allegedly rare and endangered, and was supposed to be a dwarf form. It took readily from cuttings, so I had planted a group of them in a relatively small area. Turns out they were not so 'dwarf'. They were reaching for the sky with the largest at about 4 metres. They were not what I had wanted in that area but at least they filled a space with greenery. Not so anymore, I have cut them back to stumps, filled the fractures in the soil around the uplifted roots, and am hoping they will resprout. Two of these trailer loads of debris were put through the mulcher.



Otherwise, garden maintenance is progressing. Many of the urgent jobs have been done and now I am working through the less urgent. It is amazing how much good soil builds up at the bottom of garden beds and on garden paths. The gradual migration of soil particles and mulch under the influence of gravity on our steep block means I have been able to collect some really good organic soil from these low areas. This has now been stored for future use in the garden.

Spring might not be here by the calendar yet, but I think it is by the critters. The birds all seem to be behaving in a spring-like manner, the kangaroos have joeys everywhere, and I have noticed a lot of bee activity around the hive. I've removed a couple of frames of capped honey from the hive (winter stores I had left them) and replaced them with empty frames for the queen to lay brood in. I'm hoping I have done the right thing as I am not very experienced, but I believe the microclimate on our property is more favourable for the bees, with the warmer northerly aspect and the abundance of flowering plants in the garden. Time will tell, but I know they didn't appreciate the interference as I copped a



sting on the ear in the process. Ahh...the price of a bit of honey. The bees, however, don't seem to be bothered by the kangaroos being so close to the hive. I took this photo of one kangaroo mowing the grass just in front of the hive with no problems.

This lovely pink *Prostanthera ovalifolia* that I got when Miriam gave us the talk on mint bushes is doing well in a semi-shade position and I couldn't resist this afternoon sun backlit *Grevillea flexuosa* flower and leaf. The zigzag pattern of the main stem in the leaf is why it is named flexuosa; "full of curves and bends".



Species: *Pterostylis obtusa* or *Diplodium obtusum*.

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.

Diplodium: From Greek, *diplous*, meaning "double", referring to the lateral sepals being united in the basal half to form a synsepalum.

obtusa/um: From Latin, *obtusus*, meaning "blunt" and used botanically to mean "rounded at the ends" and referring to the apex of the labellum.

Common Name: Blunt-tongue Greenhood.

Distribution: Endemic to NSW, coast and nearby ranges, north from about Bateman's Bay and also on Lord Howe Island, from sea-level to about 400m altitude.

Description: Arising from an underground tuberoid, non-flowering plants form a ground-hugging basal rosette, consisting of 3-6 ovate leaves, up to 25mm long and 15mm wide with tightly crinkled margins. Flowering plants don't form a rosette, only a single stem up to 25cm tall with 3-5 narrow stem leaves and bearing a single flower. The flower consists of 6 highly modified tepals (3 sepals and 3 petals) arranged around a central column comprised of the reproductive parts of the flower. The dorsal sepal and 2 petals are fused into an open-faced 'hood' shape up to about 28mm long by 12mm wide, while the 2 lateral sepals are fused for enough of their length to cover the open face of the hood with a protruding platform-like sinus and for their free points to form 'horns' over the hood. The third petal is called the labellum, is very sensitive to touch and sits inside the hood where ►



its tip is only just visible through the opening in the hood. When a potential pollinating insect enters the hood, the labellum is triggered to trap the insect inside the flower and force it to exit the flower via a route past the column that will assist pollination of the flower. Ingenious!

Opinion: Orchids are great little plants, but keep in mind that they are all protected in the wild, some are very sensitive to disturbance and hence, are vulnerable/threatened/endorsed. Never collect plants from wild populations and take care if you are undertaking activities around their habitats. My plants are obtained from reputable and legal sources (yes, I know that they all originated from plants collected from the bush back when that was the norm and before we knew better, but now we do know better, so don't be part of the problem!) with the aim of taking the pressure off the wild populations and hopefully increasing their numbers in cultivation.

My specimen is kept in a small water-well pot with other orchid species, the theory being to provide excellent drainage, prevent the mix from drying out and desiccating the tubers and also prevent the soil from staying too damp, which will cause the tubers to rot, particular in the hot weather when the tubers are dormant. I'm concerned that my theory hasn't been successful, as there has been no sign of orchids in the pot for far too long and I suspect that the mix has remained too damp. So perhaps this is another species to be relegated to the 'Plants that were in my Garden' file.

Sources: Backhouse – Guide to Native Orchids of NSW and ACT (2022).
 Jones – A Complete Guide to Native Orchids of Australia (2021).

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	21	13	172	40	41	155						577
Brian	Drouin (east)	121	28	14	173	45	50	159						590
Warren	Yarragon	97	16	15	153	33	52	166						530
Wayne	Tanjil South	137	25	38	169									369
Peter	Mirboo North													0
Judy	Moe South	100	6	17	265	35	54							477
Mike	Boolarra	89	12	11	137	35	47	130						459
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	71	15	14	130	18	75	149						472

As most of you know, I have been a mad propagator for many years, starting with seeds, then with cuttings, followed by division. I would never say I have mastered any of these, but I have had some success with all of them. Under Harold Aumann's tuition I also dabbled with grafting and had a little success, although at about a ten percent success rate it seems like a lot of hard work for not much outcome. Aerial layering, though, I had never tried.

Then, a few years ago, Mary's niece was unhappy that her grandfather's fig tree had been removed (his house had been sold after he died, and the new owners apparently didn't like the sprawling fig tree). I told her that her grandfather had given me a 'clone' of that tree (by aerial layering it) and it was a fit and healthy tree at our property. Long story short, yes, she would like a tree from it if I could do it. I Googled 'aerial layering fig tree', had four simultaneous tries at it on the tree, and sat back and waited. Lo and behold, when I checked a couple of months later there were roots on all four aerial layering attempts. Success! One happy niece and I distributed the remainder of the plants throughout the family.

This got me thinking. There were a few plants around my garden that just would not grow from cuttings, despite my trying multiple times in multiple seasons with multiple techniques. Basking in the glow of success from my recent fig propagation exercise, I thought "Why not try aerial layering"? With great hope, I set out and aerial layered two samples on four different plants: *Banksia* 'Coastal Cushion', *Thomasia solanacea* 'Velvet Star', *Grevillea* 'Bonfire', and *Lysiosepalum involucreatum*. All of these had resisted my previous attempts at cuttings.

The technique used is as follows. I chose summer as Harold always said this was the best time to graft natives, the plants had the best sap flow. I basically 'ring bark' the chosen stem, only removing the outer bark and only cutting down to the cambium over a length of about 2.5 cm. I then put some rooting compound (I used purple gel) on the cambium. Using a piece of clear plastic sheet, I pack water saturated potting mix around the bare cambium, wrap it tightly around the stem, and tape it in place. The final touch is some aluminium foil around the plastic to exclude sunlight from the root zone. This can be peeled back for root development checks. It is also important to maintain the layered stem at an ascending slope. I've found if it droops down too much the roots grow in the wrong direction.

I waited and waited. First one of the *Banksia* attempts failed (the plant past the 'ring bark' simply died) then the other failed the same way. Ok, so no go for *Banksia*. Eventually I found evidence of roots by peeking under the aluminium foil on the *Thomasia* and the *Lysiosepalum*. I separated these from the parent plant and carefully inspected the results. Both of the *Thomasia* had worked well with good root growth, and I was able to pot them up successfully. The *Lysiosepalum*, because it is a ground cover flowing downhill, had roots going the wrong way and on the first one I wasn't careful enough and broke the roots from the stem. The second one was potted up ok. Time passed and I would periodically check the *Grevillea* but no sign of roots. Eventually, after 18 months of waiting, I ran out of ►

patience and cut them free from the mother plant and inspected them. Both had good callus around the stem wound but no sign of roots. On the plus side the foliage was still healthy. I potted them up as they were and placed them in the bottom of my propagating shelter with the theory that the constant moist environment may allow them time to develop roots. To date this hasn't happened, but at least they haven't died!

So, where are we now? I have planted two healthy *Thomasia solanacea* plants into shady areas of my garden and they are both making good progress (see photo at right). I have inspected the root growth in the tube of *Lysiosepalum involucreatum*, it is looking great, and will soon be planted in the garden (see bottom right photo). There is no sign yet of any roots on either of the *Grevillea* 'Bonfire' plants, but they are still in my propagation 'hot house', I check them periodically, and there is still hope!

I would have to say the exercise was a successful one. Not everything worked out as I hoped but I have still been able to grow three plants that I was previously unable to, and I learned a few lessons. Maybe some plants just will not aerial layer or maybe my failures have been my bad technique. I will try again this summer (time permitting) and I would recommend any of you propagators to have a go.



Aerial layered branch cut from shrub.



Aluminium foil removed showing white threads of roots under the plastic.



Roots unwrapped and ready for potting up.



Morwell National Park July meeting

By Mike and Cathy Beamish

Some photos by Mike and Cathy Beamish from our July meeting at Morwell National Park and walk around the Foster's Gully loop.



Australian Shelduck
Tadorna tadornoides



Snow Fungus
Tremella fuciformis



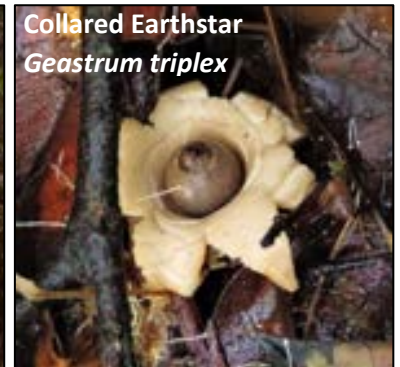
Stereum sp.



Strzelecki Koala
Phascolarctos cinereus
subsp. *victor* var. *strzeleckii*



Golden Curtain Crust
Stereum ostrea



Collared Earthstar
Geastrum triplex



Variable Oysterling
Crepidotus variabilis
& Orange
Pore Fungus
Favolaschia claudopus



Grey Coral Fungus
Clavulina cinerea



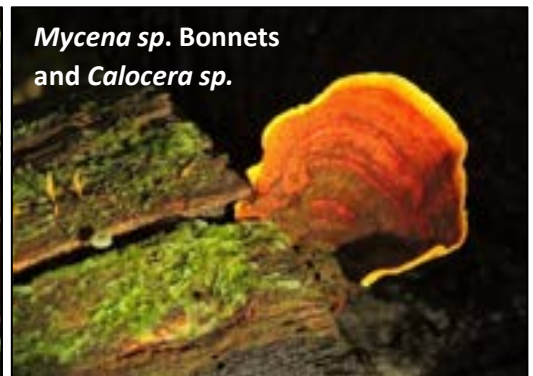
Wine Glass Fungus
Podoscypha petalodes



Gloioxanthomyces chromolimoneus



Singerocybe clitocyboides



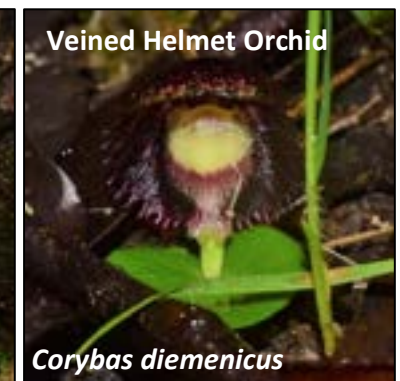
Mycena sp. Bonnets
and *Calocera* sp.



Flammulina velutipes
Velvet Foot



Splitgill Mushroom *Schizophyllum commune*



Veined Helmet Orchid
Corybas diemenicus

Coming events of interest

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

5 September 2024 – Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar - Goroke. "Pests, Partnerships and People Power."

7 September 2024 – APS Cardinia Regional Annual Plant Sale, Acoonah Park, Berwick from 8 am to 4 pm.

7 September 2024 – APS Mitchell Expo and Plant Sale, Wallan Multipurpose Centre, Bentinck Street, Wallan.

14 & 15 September 2024 APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo. Eltham Community and Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham. 10am - 3pm

21 & 22 September 2024 – APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall. 40th Anniversary. Special feature Edible Australian Native Plants. Speakers scheduled each day are Clarence Slockee, Julie Weatherhead and Neil Marriott. 9 am to 4 pm, \$5 entry.

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.

21 September till 8 October 2024 - Special Banksia Exhibition at Karwarra, featuring over 60 paintings by Ian Wallace, Juet Sculptures and plant display by Kuranga Native Nursery. Karwarra Australian Native Botanic Gardens, 1190 - 1192 Mount Dandenong Tourist Road, Kalorama. 10 am to 4 pm weekdays, 1 - 4 pm weekends.

28 & 29 September 2024 – APS Bendigo Flower Show, Victory Christian College, Kairn Road, Strathdale, Bendigo. 9.30 am to 4.00 pm. \$5 entry, children free. Specialist native plant nurseries, books, garden accessories and more.

30 September to 4 October, 2024 – ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference in Melbourne hosted by APS Victoria. Visit <https://www.anpsa2024conference.com/>.

2 October 2024 - AJ Swaby Address by Phillip Johnson - 3:30PM. "Connected Through Nature". As part of the ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference, this session is open to the public, free of charge, at The Round, Nunawading. Phillip Johnson is a Landscape Designer and 2013 Gold and Best in Show winner at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show in London. "*By healing our environment, we heal ourselves at the same time*". Registrations are required via the website <https://www.anpsa2024conference.com/>

5 October 2024 – Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase. Masonic Lodge Hall, 426 High Street, Echuca.

12 & 13 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

19th October, 2024 – APS Ballarat Spring Flower Show, Robert Clark Horticultural Centre, Ballarat Botanical Gardens, Gillies Street, Ballarat. (Next to the Conservatory). 10am to 4pm. Native Plants for Sale.

23 & 24 November 2024 – APS Wangaratta host APS Victoria Quarterly Weekend - Early Summer in 'The Warbies'. Committee of Management meeting in the Uniting Church Hall, Central Wangaratta and AGM in Old Town and Country Tavern on Greta Road.



22 & 23 March 2025 - 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

24 to 30 March 2025 – Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (MIFGS), Carlton Gardens and Royal Exhibition Building. Website: <https://melbflowershow.com.au>.

12 April 2025 - APS Yarra Yarra Plant & Book Sale.

2 & 3 August 2025 15th FJC Rogers Seminar on Epacridaceae hosted by APS Mornington Peninsula in the Mornington Secondary College.

16 to 24 August 2025 - Banksia Week. Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. Includes plant sales, plant walks, exhibitions and displays in the auditorium.

13 to 14 September 2025 - APS Yarra Yarra Plants Expo.

11 & 12 October 2025 - 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

24 to 28 August 2026 ANPSA 2026 Biennial Conference, in Alice Springs, organised by APS SA and APS Alice Springs. The conference theme is "Amazing Arid Australia".



Eucalyptus caesia 'Silver Princess'
against a background of
Acacia oxycedrus.
Photo by Sonya Chambers.

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

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