

2.

MARCH MEETING

Guest Speaker - Geoff Lay Topic : Wilsons Promontory

Our guest for March was Geoff Lay who gave an illustrated talk on Wilsons Promontory.



Wilsons Promontory is a small peninsula approximately 40km x 18km which forms southernmost part of the Australian mainland. It is composed mainly of granite. This granite extends to north-east Tasmania, which was joined to the mainland by a land bridge until 10,000 years ago when the climate warmed, melting ice sheets, raising the sea level and submerging the Bass Strait.

Early activities on Promontory included sealing, whaling, tin mining, logging and the grazing of cattle. A lighthouse was constructed in 1859. It was declared a reserve the late 1800's and a National Park in 1905. The park was added to in 1969 (an additional 7422 hectares).

The main accommodation is at Tidal River. The river flows through tea tree (*Leptospermum lanigerum*) and the leached tannins give the river a lovely brown colour.

On the other side of the promontory is Sealers Cove which also has large tides. This can be problematic as the camping ground is on the other side of the river so care must be taken to note the time of the high tide unless you enjoy getting wet.

The bush tracks, much to Geoff's chagrin have now been upgraded to duckboards eliminating the thrill of sinking into the mud.

Fire particularly in the past two decades has had major impacts on the park. In 2003 the bottom of the park was burned and the top section burned in 2007. Geoff showed the recovery after the fires. Three weeks after the fires all the leaf litter and smaller plants were gone as if someone had vacuumed the ground. The first appearance of green is a moss, *Funaria*, this then dies off and the first plants to reappear were the monocots (grasses, lilies and orchids) and the ferns. Grass trees were shown in full bloom as was the Fire Orchid (*Pyrorchis nigricans*), Common Fringe Lily (*Thysanotus tuberosus*) and White Iris (*Diplarrena moraea*). The eucalypts sprang back to life from epicormic buds as did *Banksia serrata* and the paperbarks shed their burnt outer layer and resumed business as normal. Over the next few years the dicots have become more prominent especially the pea flowers.

Most of the plants recovered quickly and within a few years there was little discernible difference between the pre and post fire photos.

Lots of images were shown of various plants growing at the park including Wonga Vine (*Pandorea pandorana*), Pig Face (*Carpobrotus rossii* & *Disphyma crassifolium*), Creamy Candles (*Stackhousia monogyna*), Fan Flower (*Scaevola albida*), Prickly Moses (*Acacia verticillata*), Common Everlasting (*Chrysocephalum apiculatum*), Sundews (*Drosera* sp.), Common Heath (*Epacris impressa*), Running Postman (*Kennedia prostrata*), White Kunzea (*Kunzea ambigua*), Horny cone-bush (*Isopogon ceratophyllus*), Dusty Miller (*Spyridium parvifolium*) and Correas (*Correa reflexa* & *Correa alba*).

MARCH SPECIMEN TABLE

Mandy brought in two eucalypts – *E. forrestiana* (right) which she thought was to be *E. youngiana* when she



planted it. *E. forrestiana*, although attractive with its interesting red seed pods, is way too big. *E. albida* has interesting foliage – the juvenile leaves are silvery and roundish, whereas the adult leaves are much greener and longer. Mandy also had pieces of *Crowea saligna* which is just coming into flower, and *Correa decumbens*.



Marj showed *Backhousia citriodora* (lemon myrtle) which has attractive heads of its calices after the fluffy white flowers have finished. *Goodenia vernicosa* has the typical yellow flowers of the genus but the leaves are longer and the bush is lighter looking. *Rhododendron locheae* (left) is now in full



bloom. *Actinotis helianthi* (right) was planted with the idea of collecting seeds for the APS Vic seed Bank, but although the plants are healthy enough, they haven't produced any seed – maybe the pollinators just haven't been around. *Correa manni* has dark pink flowers with a white throat – her bush is only a couple



of years old, measures about 1m high and 1.5m wide and is growing well under a *Eucalyptus ficifolia*. Finally, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, which Geoff Lay said has over 29 sub species, has thrived in Marj and Norm's driveway – with cars regularly passing over and little water.

Scaevola nitida was John's first specimen. It is very hardy and has blue flowers. Can be pruned heavily and grows well from the cuttings produced. The pink form of *Epacris impressa*, our State floral emblem is hardier



than the white according to John. *Grevillea armigera* (left) is loved by the birds, has black styles and striated seed capsules but is very prickly. John's is grafted and he has had his for over 25 years. Two spyradiums completed his collection. *S. bifidum* (right) is a small shrub to 50cm high and about 1m



S. bifidum photo by Murray Fagg in Wikipedia

wide with mostly forked tips to the leaves and silvery bracts surrounding the flowers. *S. coactilifolium* from Kangaroo Is. also has the silver bracts and has a columnar form to about 1.5m tall and 500mm wide. It can be pruned, but John has had no joy striking the cuttings.

Mick's first ever specimen was a bag full of finger limes taken from his one bush - he was unable to say what the species was. Several people tasted them – the fruit broke open to a mass of reddish caviar type spheres and were sharp tasting. Would go well with smoked salmon and sour cream? Certainly combined well with the cheese at supper!

4.

Mick's bowl of finger limes



Pick of the Bunch - March 2023

Citrus australasica F. Muell

Finger Lime

Specimen grown by Mick Connolly

Citrus australasica is a thorny understory shrub or small tree of lowland subtropical rainforest and rainforest in the coastal border region of Queensland and New South Wales. It can grow to a height of six metres but is most often only 1 - 3 metres tall. The flowers are mainly white but there are pale pink flowered forms. Flowering occurs from autumn to summer although with grafted plants it can occur at any time. Fruits are usually ripe in the autumn through to the beginning of winter.

The fruit is an elongated cylinder to 8cm long and 1 -1.5cm in diameter. The outer skin can be green, yellow, black, brown, purple or red whilst the flesh can be green, yellow, pink or reddish. The colour of the fruit's skin is not an indicator of the flesh inside. The flesh or pulp consists of juicy vesicles not dissimilar to caviar. The unique tangy flavoured vesicles are now widely used in restaurants as an additive or garnish. Its popularity as a 'bushfood' has led to several selections of the species being available for sale.



Plants can be grown from seed, although it may take up to fifteen years to bear fruit. Cuttings can be difficult to strike and have a similarly slow growth rate. Grafting onto citrus rootstocks such as *Citrus trifoliata* or Troyer citrange (a hybrid of Washington Navel Orange and *Citrus trifoliata*.) increases growth rates and enables plants to withstand a greater range of soils and climatic conditions. CSIRO has crossed *C.australasica* with a Calamondin to create The Australian Sunrise Lime and with Rangpur lime to create The Australian Blood Lime.

A partial sun or sunny aspect with well drained soil is best. Supplementary watering during the warmer months is recommended. Plants can be fertilised but using only a third of the quantity of fertiliser used for ordinary citrus trees. Prune to shape after fruiting.

Citrus are members of the Rutaceae family which consists of c.150 genera and c.1800 species worldwide) with 41 genera and c.350 species in Australia, occurring in all states. It includes such genera as *Asterolasia*, *Boronia*, *Correa*, *Diplolaena*, *Eriostemon*, *Phebalium*, *Philothea* and *Zieria*. There are six species of *Citrus* in Australia, *C. australasica*, *C. australis*, *C.garrawayi*, *C. glauca*, *C. inodora* and *C. maideniana*.

The genus *Citrus* is derived from the Ancient Greek word *citron*. The specific name, *australasica*, meaning southern, refers to its Australian origin.

NEXT MEETING

Supper: Jean Staunton (please bring some milk)

Write-up: Chris Bain

EVENTS DIARY

March 25,26 Friends of Cranbourne plant sale. Ian Potter Lawn, 10am – 4pm

April 4th “The Tree Project”

May 2nd John Thompson: “Banksias”

June Norm and Marj Seaton: Silo Art, Part 2

August AGM and members’ slides

September Speaker: Chris Larkin – “Hakeas”

APS Victoria

March 29 to April 2 Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show (See Promotion on page 7)

April 1 APS Geelong plant sale. Wirrawilla, lovely Banks, 8:30 – 4:00

April 22 APS Yarra Yarra Autumn Plant Sale, Eltham Community & Reception Centre, Eltham 10 – 4

April 29 APS Mornington Peninsula Plant Sale, The Briars, Mt. Martha 10 – 3 (See Promotion p.7)

September 23,24 COMM hosted by APS Grampians. Week long activities followed by Pomonal Native Flower Show on Sept 30 and Oct 1, Pomonal Hall.

PHOTO GALLERY

Corymbia ficifolia planted by Norm in



1981.

From Gillian's wanderings:

1. *Brachychiton bidwillii* – Gillian's garden, first flowering



6.

2. *Corymbia ficifolia* in Ruth's garden



3. *Banksia marginata* from Monash University, Clayton campus



4. *Swainsona formosa* (Sturt's Desert pea) – nursery, Cranbourne



PROMOTIONS



Australian Native
Plant Sale
 Saturday 29th April 2023
 10am to 3.30pm
The Briars Nepean Hwy Mt Martha
Professional advice available from the growers

FREE ENTRY	<i>Free talks on Pruning & maintenance Propagating plants</i>	<i>Book Sales ----- Kids Corner</i>
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Australian Plants Society Mornington Peninsula
 For further details 0428 284 974



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