

2.

APRIL MEETING

Presentation on the TreeProject by David Smith

TreeProject is a Victorian community based volunteer organisation that aims to get urban and rural communities working together to put trees back on the land. Using a network of trained volunteers TreeProject grows indigenous seedlings for rural landholders, Landcare groups, councils and other groups that need help with revegetation.



Image from the TreeProject website

Speaker David Smith reminded us that we have all seen significant changes in the landscape in our lifetimes and that the problem of vegetation loss has long been recognised. In Victoria some 66% of indigenous vegetation has been lost through clearing since European settlement and land clearing is ongoing. Although the problem has long been recognised TreeProject provides a practical solution for city based volunteer growers to contribute to revegetation and have a connection to the environment. For landholders the cost is \$220 per 500 plants.

Commencing in the late 1980s TreeProject provides training and the materials necessary including the seeds with appropriate provenance. This includes a comprehensive growing guide on the website as well as a WhatsApp group to share experiences and get help from fellow growers. Volunteers contribute their time and hard work to propagate and care for seedlings of indigenous trees, shrubs and grasses in their own backyards until they are ready for planting out. For landholders, being able to access 'at-cost' seedlings from TreeProject is often all the incentive and encouragement they need to start restoring degraded areas.

David then provided some statistics of TreeProject's activity over the years. Since it began over 2 million plants have been grown at a rate of 100 to 150 thousand a year with an ever larger grower base in recent years. This last year there are 361 growers, growing 135 thousand plants covering 189 species. That is almost 300 boxes of plants. TreeProject overgrown plants ordered each year to account for failure and growers need to prepare the plants so they are tough enough to be planted out into the paddock.

David made a strong pitch for new growers to join the program, but there are also opportunities to help in other ways such as acting as couriers to transport plants to the land holders. For anyone wishing to get involved you can contact TreeProject through the website www.treeproject.org.au

APRIL SPECIMEN TABLE

Not a very big table for April – not surprising really as the weather dried up through March and early April and there are only a limited number of species flowering at this time of year anyway.

Mandy started off with *Acacia jibberdingensis* ("**-ensis**" = place of origin, so from Jibberding in WA), right, a strong but wispy wattle with bright yellow cylindrical flowers. Grows 3.5 – 4m.



3.

The reason for *Eucalyptus macrandra* being on the table was the lerps (below)— like little white spits, there were quite a few on Mandy’s specimen and they are there for most of the year. Rainbow lorikeets love the lerps.



The lerp covers drop onto the ground and crunch underfoot. A dark red form of *Correa reflexa* from the Brisbane Ranges was next followed by the orange/pink *Correa pulchella* “Autumn Blaze”. A grafted *Calytrix fraseri* gave a splendid showing of bright pink/purple flowers which it displayed all summer (below). Having scale seems not to worry it.



Finally, a piece of *Plectranthus sp.* had a less intrusive minty aroma than some of its kind – it is probably a hybrid and has purple backs on the leaves. Blue- banded bees are frequently seen around it.

Marj had just the two pieces – the velvety dark pink/red *Rhododendron lochiaie* and *Banksia spinulosa*, one of the species, not one of the ‘candle’ variants. Her plants is going to have over 60 flowers by the time the buds all open. It is about 1.5m high and 1.5m wide. It has to be pruned every year to ensure the flowers keep coming.

John’s offering included *Thryptomene hyporhytis*, a ‘bullet-proof’ plant if kept well pruned. It flowers in bursts, and comes from WA. *Olearia passerinoides*, unlike some other Olearias, has bright green foliage and white flowers. Looks delicate, but isn’t. *Homoranthus porteri* has small bright pink flowers which are present all year. He thinks that Homoranthus is a much under-rated genus if one can ignore the ‘perfume’ of some of the species eg *Homoranthus papillatus* which some thing has a honey smell, others find it more like mouse droppings. *Lambertia formosa* from NSW, or “Mountain Devil” (below left)



is loved by the birds, has a lignotuber, and is named for the two horns that are on the seed pod.



John finds pink *Epacris impressa*

(Victoria’s floral emblem), above, easier to grow than the white version. *Marianthus bicolor* is a scrambler with white flowers which have purple striations inside. *Spyridium vexilliferum*, the ‘propellor plant’ Anglesea form, has three distinct fine bracts on each flower which catch the breeze. Finally *Ptilotus divaricatus* is a scrambling

plant from north of Perth with pom-pom flowerheads. It strikes quite well from cuttings and is insect pollinated eg by hover flies, blue banded bees etc.

Pick of the Bunch – April 2023*Ptilotus divaricatus* (Gaudich.) F.Muell.

Climbing Mulla Mulla

Specimen grown by John Thompson

Ptilotus divaricatus is a prostrate to scrambling shrub, 0.3 – 1.5 metres in height by up to 2 metres wide. It is not a true climber but uses nearby vegetation for support. If no plants are close at hand it forms a prostrate mat. It grows in sandy or lateritic soils* from the east of Perth north to Karratha in the Pilbara region. Flowering is from late spring through to early autumn. The white to cream flowers, although small compared to other *Ptilotus* species, can be profuse and are most conspicuous. Plants prefer a sunny position in a well drained soil. Once established the plants are drought resistant.



Propagation can be from seed but is easiest from cuttings.

Ptilotus is a member of the Amaranthaceae family. The Amaranthaceae family consists of c.850 species in 65 genera and is widespread in most habitats around the world. Australia has 10 genera with c.150 species with *Ptilotus* making up the bulk of the species. *Ptilotus* is largely endemic with c.90 species, 80 of which are to be found in WA with 1 extending into Indonesia.

The genus name, *Ptilotus*, is derived from the Greek, *ptilotos*, meaning winged or feathered, referring to the feathery flower heads. The specific name, *divaricatus*, meaning widely spreading or forked in reference to the plant's growth habit.

* lateritic soils are soil layers that are rich in iron oxide and often aluminium and are derived from a wide variety of rocks weathering under strongly oxidizing and leaching conditions.

NEXT MEETING

Supper: Marj Seaton (please bring some milk)

Write-up: John Thompson

EVENTS DIARY

May 2nd John Thompson: "Banksias"

June Norm and Marj Seaton: Silo Art, Part 2

July

August AGM and members' slides

September Speaker: Chris Larkin – "Hakeas"

APS Victoria

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.

5.

PHOTO GALLERY

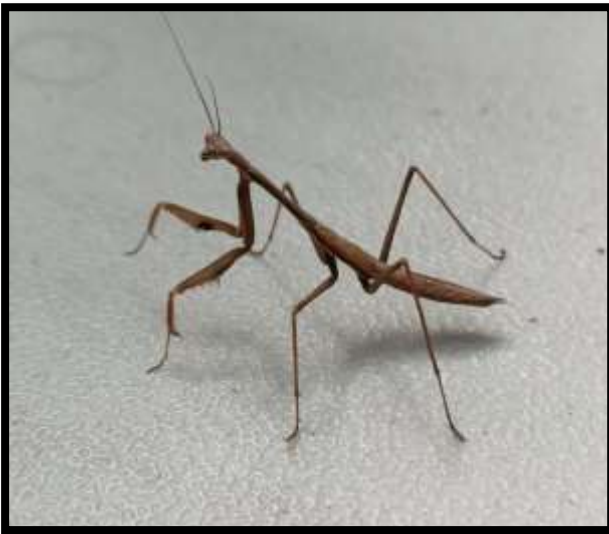
Some of the wildlife around Ray's place:



Moth from the inside, looking out



A scorpion inside on the carpet



Praying mantis



Kookaburra

Yellow antenna black
spider wasp.



More from Ray – plants this time:

6.



Banksia menziesii, dwarf form



Banksia paludosa



Beaufortia sparsa



Hibbertia linearis

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