



Dianella admixta

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY
SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE REGION INC.

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APRIL NEWSLETTER 2024

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month, February to May, then September, October and December.

Visitors are always very welcome

The venue is the Hughesdale Community Hall, Cnr Poath and Kangaroo Roads, Hughesdale (MEL 69 C7)

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Please forward any newsletter contributions, comments or photos to Marj at 36 Voumard Street, Oakleigh South 3167 or to the email address above.

*******DEADLINE FOR THE MAY NEWSLETTER IS 22ND APRIL*******

<p><u>Next Meeting</u> Tuesday 2 April 2024 Hughesdale Community Hall Cnr Poath and Kangaroo Roads, Hughesdale Speaker: Ross Shepherd Topic: Seaford Banksia Arboretum.</p>	<p><u>Contents</u> Page 1 April meeting Page 2 2024 rainfall Pages 2-5 March Meeting Pages 5-6 March Specimen Table Page 6 Next Meeting Pages 6-7 Pick of the Bunch Page 7 Events Diary Promotions Page 8 Photo Gallery</p>
<p>Ross writes: I started my love of banksias about 35 years ago on a fairly large block of clay in Vermont South where I bought and planted in the ground about 60 species of banksias but, looking back there now 9 years after we moved to Seaford, there's only about 7 left - the best a B. plagiocarpa 4m high. We moved to Seaford 9 years ago to a townhouse with a very small amount of land which I hopefully wished would support Banksias better than my last home. In went Banksias menziesii, prionotes, speciosa and marginata. All took off like no tomorrow and all began flowering in the first year and every years since till space requirements saw me remove the marginata. The speciosa got a viral infection that saw it removed too. This led to realise I may be living in Banksia heaven, so I started looking for where else I could demonstrate this gift. Around the corner in Seaford Rd Seaford were 2 deserted dump wastes of land. I found out they belonged to Vicroads. Over a year or so I won an agreement with them to carry out roadside revegetation works, with volunteers' insurances covered by the Keep Australia Beautiful network. Now nearing 1700 planted and growing banksias, it seems my dream is becoming a reality.</p>	

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RAINFALL FOR 2024 (mm)

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Oakleigh South	135.5	29.5											165
Highett	107.5	12.5											120
Hampton													
Cranbourne South	108	13											121
Elsterwick	112												112
Ashburton													

MARCH MEETING

Speakers: Lyn Allison, President / Rhodwen Cunningham, Nursery Manager
Topic: Westgate Biodiversity: Bili Nursery & Landcare

Westgate Park – Lyn Allison

Lyn is President of Westgate Biodiversity: Bili Nursery & Landcare (incorporates Friends of Westgate Park), and has been actively involved with the organisation from the early days. Her artistic background has enabled her to gain observational skills in the natural world. Lyn has translated this appreciation of form and colour into photography, particularly at the macro level.

Westgate Park History

Lyn presented some early images of the Westgate Park (WGPK) site prior to commencement of revegetation works. It occupies 40 hectares stretching 1.8km from Todd Road under the Westgate Bridge to the Yarra River, and is 6 km from Melbourne’s CBD. Approximately 1/3 of the area comprises wetlands and two lakes (one freshwater and one salt). Historically, the area including WGPK was characterised by sandy, scrubby and watery terrain with sparse indigenous vegetation. With the onset of British colonisation in the 1830’s, this area was shared with indigenous people. Competition for land, water and food resources combined with high rates of disease had catastrophic consequences for the indigenous population who were forced to live further away. By the 1950’s, intensive industry produced toxic, smelly waste and the area including WGPK was used for horse and car racing, a sand mine, aircraft runway and rubbish tip. Consequently, little remained of the natural environment that once occupied this area.



Official Opening of Westgate Park– 7 November 1985



Aerial view of Westgate Park – early days

Timeline

November 1985 – official opening of WGPK by the Premier of Victoria, Joan Kirner. The aim was to create a recreational park space to reflect the undulating nature of the area, to be originally planted with native species rather than indigenous plants.

1999 – Friends of WGPK established by Naomie Sunner, a 19 year-old VCA photography student who discovered the site on her transformative trek along the length of the Yarra River. She thought this area had the potential to be revegetated and transformed into a natural bushland space, largely planted with indigenous species.

2018 – Amalgamation of Friends of WGPK and St Kilda Indigenous Nursery Cooperative (now renamed Westgate Biodiversity: Bili Nursery & Landcare).

Present Day – WGPK has been transformed into a healthy bushland space home to many species of plants, animals, birds and insects. Recent regeneration of some plant species (eg. Grasses) is most encouraging. This has largely been achieved by dedicated group of volunteers who undertake many activities including citizen science, weeding/maintenance, and revegetation.



The Lookout at Westgate Park

Flora and Fauna

Westgate Biodiversity: Bili Nursery & Landcare aimed to create 9 distinct plant communities using 300+ 'sandbelt' plant species that once existed within 5km of the CBD. These are represented by: coast banksia woodland, coastal heathland scrub, coastal saltmarsh, heathy woodland, plains grassland, plains grassy woodland, plains sedgy wetlands, riparian woodland and sand heathland. Lyn presented several photos (taken by herself) of the various flora and fauna species that current inhabit WGPK. These include: *Atriplex paludosa*, *Cladium procerum*, *Dodonea viscosa ssp spatulata*, *Marsilea drummondii*, *Chloris truncata*, *Themeda triandra*, *Melaleuca lanceolata*, *Pomaderris ssp paralia*, *Banksia integrifolia*, several *Acacia species (dealbata, paradoxa, mearnsii, melanoxylon)*, *Allocasaurina littoralis*, *Alyxia buxifolia*, *Aotus ericoides*, amongst others. Fauna sightings include the white skink, common froglet, eastern blue tongue lizard, long-neck turtle, superb fairy wren, white-faced heron, nankeen night heron and little cormorant. Eighty species of fungi have been record and lichen was recently sighted for the first time. An encouraging sign of good park health as lichen doesn't usually grow where pollution is evident. Numerous bird and insect species have also been sighted – approximately 175 bird species recorded with regular citizen science activities undertaken to monitor these populations. Bird surveys have been undertaken for 20 years by a dedicated volunteer group.

Bossiaea cinerea



Blue- banded bee



Challenges

Weed management is a significant problem that requires a significant time investment.

Rabbits less of a problem now and largely eradicated.

The Pink Lake phenomenon – due to high saline levels and no water outlet, causing algae blooms.



Pink Lake phenomenon 2019

Wetland Plants & Biodiversity - Rhodwen Cunningham

Rhod's expertise is primarily with indigenous wetland plants and their role in wetland environments. She introduced her presentation with an overview of Bili Nursery, a not-for-profit organisation affiliated with WGPK whose primary role is to propagate and supply indigenous, provenance plants for Greater Melbourne. They specialise in 'Sandbelt' species. This was followed by a presentation on wetland plants and their role in biodiversity.

There are 4 types of wetlands, namely:

- Ephemeral wetlands – seasonal flooding, short term bodies of water occasionally fed by springs.
- Billabongs – branches of rivers forming a backwater or stagnant pool caused by overflow after floods.
- Wetlands – an area covered by water or saturated soil, often ground water in spring, or seasonal inundation.
- Constructed wetlands – most frequently used as runoff filtration for urban areas and community amenities, examples include waterways in Caroline Springs, Braeside and Pakenham Lakeside.

Specialised Wetland Plant Types:

- Ephemeral – margins and divots that experience occasional inundation then dry out.
- Marginal – edges of stabilised areas.
- Aquatic – submerged – deep water only emerging from the surface to be pollinated.
- Aquatic emergent – deep water plants that have specialised foliage for above and below water – can usually adapt over time.
- Riparian – usually above the waterline.

Macrophyte species suitable for running water filtration include *Baumea arthropphylla*, *Schoenoplectus tabernaemontani*, *Bolboschoenus caldwellii*, *Cladium procerum*, *Eleocharis sphacelata* and *Phragmites australis*.

Wetlands can be constructed as serpentine waterways, as deep pools for sediment reduction and for habitat creation.

Plant selections can create habitat, absorb nutrients and reduce biomass.

Wetland plants can be propagated using the following methods:

- Bog method
- Fermentation
- After ripening
- Salt or flood replication

We thank Lyn and Rhodwen for their most interesting presentations on all things Westgate Park and hope that it has inspired some of us to visit this site soon.

Example of a constructed wetland environment.



MARCH SPECIMEN TABLE

Mandy was the sole contributor for this month's specimen table and shared with us the following cuttings from her garden:

- *Stenocarpus sinuatus*, commonly known as the firewheel tree, is an Australian rainforest tree in the Proteaceae family. Grows to a height of 40 metres and produces striking bright reddish orange flowers. Mandy has some self-seeding in her garden. (Photo 1 next page).

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- *Eucalyptus sepulcralis* (weeping gum or mallee) is a slender mallee or tree that typically grows 3-8 metres tall. Has smooth bark and a weeping habit and is endemic to the southern coast of Western Australia. Flowers are pale yellow with flower buds in groups of seven.
- Two *Correa* species/cultivars - *reflexa* 'Brisbane Ranges' (Centre above), a hardy, medium shrub 1-2 metres with red bell-shaped flowers, and *pulchella* 'Autumn Blaze': a low growing *Correa* with glossy, mid-green foliage and decorative brilliant orange flowers in autumn and early spring. Naturally occurs on Kangaroo Island.
- *Hypocalymma xanthopetalum* or golden flowered myrtle is a delightful shrub from the South West of Western Australian with golden yellow small flowers massed along stems from mid-winter to mid-spring. It has small leaves and a compact upright habit. (Photo right above)
- *Commelina cyanea*, commonly known as scurvy weed, is a perennial prostrate herb from the Commelinaceae family. Endemic to moist forests and woodlands of eastern Australia, Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island. Blue flowers appear over the warmer months and are pollinated by bees and flies.

NEXT MEETING

Supper: Mick Connolly (remember some milk please)

Pick of the Bunch March 2024

Hypocalymma xanthopetalum F. Muell. Golden-flowered Myrtle
Specimen grown by Amanda Loudon



Hypocalymma xanthopetalum is a small spreading shrub (0.3 - 1m x 0.5 - 1.5m) from the south west of Western Australia. Its distribution ranges from the north of Perth to the south of Geraldton. It grows in sandy heathland or open woodland.

The yellow flowers produced in pairs in the leaf axils. In cultivation flowering can occur all year round. In the wild flowering can occur from July to March. They are very showy and attract a variety of insect species.

A sunny aspect in well drained soil is recommended. Plants will also grow in a partly shaded position. Pruning helps promote bushy growth and if required curb its spread. It is drought tolerant once established and resistant to light frosts. Propagate from seed or cuttings.

Hypocalymma is endemic to the south west of Western Australia. The genus consists of c.34 species, some of which are as yet unnamed. It is a member of the Myrtaceae family, a large family of c.3500 species in c.150 genera with c.1400

species in c.75 genera occurring in Australia.

It includes such species as *Astartea*, *Beaufortia*, *Callistemon*, *Calothamnus*, *Darwinia*, *Kunzea*, *Leptospermum*, *Melaleuca*, *Thryptomene* and *Verticordia*.

The genus name, *Hypocalymma*, is derived from the Greek; *hypo* meaning under and *calymma*, a covering or hood. This refers to the cap of the calyx when in bud. The species name, *xanthopetalum* is derived from the Latin *xantho*, yellow and *petalum*, a petal i.e. having yellow flowers.

EVENTS DIARY

APS South East Melbourne

2 April – Ross Shepherd, “Banksia Arboretum”, Seaford

7 May – David de Angeles, “Frogs” TBC

June, July, August – Winter break

APS Victoria

2024

20 – 24 March – MIFGS, Carlton Gardens/Exhibition Buildings

23,24 March – Cranbourne Friends Autumn Plant Sale

13 April - APS Geelong Plant Sale “Wirrawilla”, Lovely Banks, 8:30 – 4

20 April - APS Yarra Yarra Autumn Plant Sale, 801 Main Rd, Eltham 10 – 4

14 & 15 September – APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo

21, 22 September – APS Grampians Pomonal Native Flower Show

30 Sept – 4 Oct – ANPSA Biennial conference in Melbourne hosted by APS Vic – see below

PROMOTIONS



The venue has changed to “The Round” in Nunawading. Conference topics include Gardens for Wildlife and Habitat, Restoration and Revegetation of Wetlands, Grasslands and Verges, Care for the Rare, Insects and Biodiversity, Garden Design, Indigenous Food Plants and many more.

Tours before and after will go to Victoria’s best wildflower areas and day excursions will feature new botanic gardens, private gardens and wild areas.

Register your interest through the APS Vic website: <https://apsvic.org.au>

Bookings are now open

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## ***PHOTO GALLERY***

A marbled gecko spotted by Mandy at the hall after the last meeting



Also from Mandy: *Hibbertia stellaria*



From Ray Turner:

Birdwatchers might find this one interesting even though, as Ray says, it's not a great photo – a migratory Eastern Koel found in his garden. There are a couple of insects too: a crane fly and a scorpion fly.

