

# Australian Plants Society (Wangaratta Inc) September 2021 Newsletter

Visit APS Victoria website  
<https://apsvic.org.au>

## MEETINGS:

*Venue: Masonic Lodge, 101 Appin Street, Wangaratta.*

*Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7pm.*

*Visitors are always welcome.*

Once again Covid-19 restrictions have thwarted our program. **Our AGM, Spring Spectacular and October meetings have been cancelled.** Possibly, we may be able to hold a general meeting on the 25th November. This will be confirmed prior to the date.

## NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING:

**7 November:** TBC.

## OUTINGS:

*Usually the Sunday after Monthly Meeting. Arrive at 10.30am for an 11am Start.*

**26 September** The previously advertised Working bee (weeding, etc.), readying the van Riet garden for an Open Garden to raise money for Oxfam is cancelled. Instead, we will visit the **Killawarra Forest**. Details of how to get there are included in this newsletter. If more than 10 people attend we will split into groups.

**16-17 October :** **Cancelled.** Van Riet Open Garden.

**7 November:** **Cancelled.** Propagation morning.

**28 November:** **TBC.** Christmas party lunch. At Glenda and Bernie Datson's, 4 Wickham Court, Baranduda. 0428 401 090.

The Australian Plants Society (Victoria) is dedicated to promoting, growing and the conservation of Australian native plants, in gardens, community areas and their original environments.

*Growing Australian magazine* - an electronic copy can be accessed via the APS Victoria website.

# WANGARATTA AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

OUTING FOR SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 26TH 2021

## TO THE KILLAWARRA FOREST CAMP

### Springtime Flower Walk

## WARBY OVENS NATIONAL PARK

**Meet** 10.30am for 11am at The (Forest) Camp. We will provide a couple of tables. Please bring a folding chair, your lunch and drinks, cup, etc – i.e. everything else, **plus some morning tea to share**. A hand lens may be handy. If there are more than 10 of us, we will divide into 'pods' of up to 10 people, to comply with COVID-safe regulations.

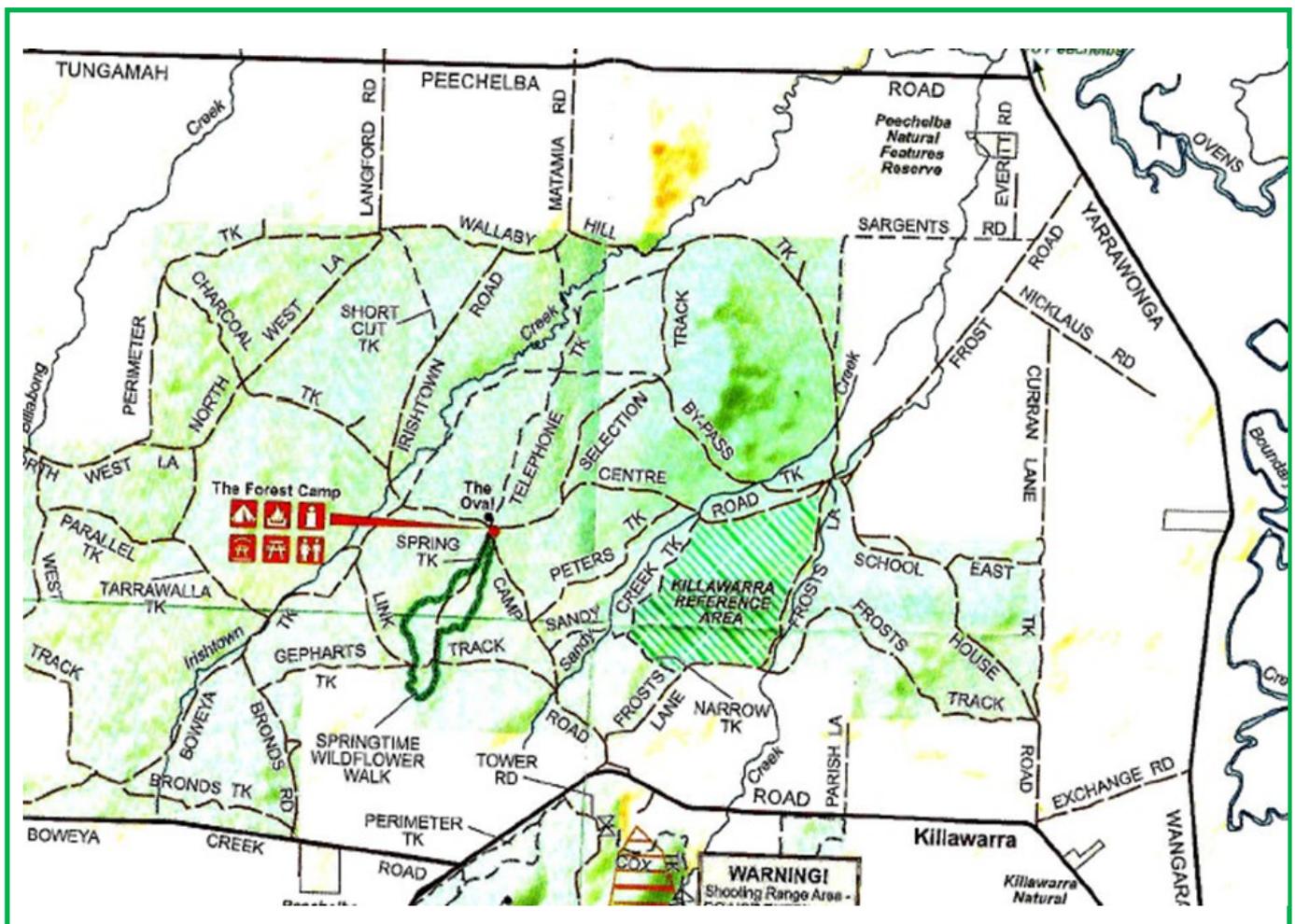
Locality map below. From the Wangaratta-Yarrawonga Road, take the Boweya Road. The turn into Camp Road (leading to the Camp) is not easily visible from the Boweya Road. It is 'straight ahead' where the main road turns slightly to the left.



### **Springtime Flower Walk – 4.9km loop, 2.5hrs – Grade 2**

This easy loop walk is a lovely family stroll through Box Ironbark forest rich in birdlife. In spring, wildflowers cover the forest floor. The track is relatively flat and well signed.

Starting at Forest Camp, you can take the shorter northern loop (1.2km, 30mins) or the longer southern loop (3.7km, 2hrs) or combine them both.



## CLEMATIS ARISTATA - OLD MAN'S BEARD

Helen van Riet

The intention of designing a naturalistic native garden is to create a pleasing landscape of structure, form, colour and contrasts.

Flowers may be seasonal and are not necessarily the foremost consideration. There are very few plants which flower almost continuously. *Brachyscome multifida* (cut-leaf daisy) is one exception that comes to mind. Yet the question: "What are the flowers like?" is often asked by folks who visit our garden and are interested in a particular plant. "What else is interesting?" is rarely asked. In my opinion, seeds of some plants are as eye-catching as the flowers.

A plant of stand-out character when not in flower is *Clematis aristata* (Old Man's Beard). This vigorous climber uses the structure of other plants for the twining leaf-stems to gain a hold. It wreaths its hosts with profuse white starry blooms in early summer. Plants will grow in most soils with a cool root run. But there is more.....

*C. aristata* is dioecious. (Male and female flowers are borne on separate plants.) In autumn, white fluffy clusters of seeds with long silky awns are borne on the female plants. In autumn, these conspicuous white fluffy clusters are a common sight in bushland and along rural roadsides. These seed clusters remain for several months.

*C. aristata* is attractive when twining through shrubbery or trained to cover a fence or trellis. The bright green spade-shaped foliage can effectively offset paler green or grey foliaged hosts. Plants die back in late autumn, and can be pruned in winter to just above ground level. They will rapidly regrow in spring.

*C. aristata* is a useful annual fast-growing summer shade screen for training up over a trellis or pergola. Because plants use their leaf stems to climb upwards, provision of a vertical support is required. They are pruned annually.

The species is variable, occurring naturally in all the eastern States. A number of forms are available commercially. Some originating from moist gullies bear flowers up to 8 cm across.

Propagation is successful from stem cuttings or fresh seed.



From **Vaughans Australian Plants Pomonal** facebook page:

#### **“BEST TIME TO PLANT”**

“One of the more common things I hear or read , is discussion on the best time to plant.

Here are my thoughts.

The optimum time to plant out is during the warmer months, throughout spring and summer.

My reasoning behind this statement is that this is the period when plants are growing. Quite simply, the ground is heating up. Plants will do little or no establishing during the late autumn/winter due to the soil being cold. Why, therefore, would you put, particularly tubestock, into ground that is cooling, subjecting them to the perils of winter? Drizzly, damp, frosty, cloudy days do nothing to help tiny plants to start their journey. Obviously there are exceptions. Large scale plantings, windows of opportunity with people's time, cost, availability of water, etc. Putting those restrictions aside, if the option is there for the entire calendar, then September - March is my preference. Clearly if this time is chosen, then watering throughout the first summer is essential. Good layers of mulch are also a prerequisite, to keep plant root runs cool and to assist with moisture retention. The rewards are that you will have plants that will not only establish, but flourish. The flip side is you cannot be away for extended stretches, as the newly planted stock **MUST** be watered. How often, you ask? The answer is dependent on the season, the soil type, whether you have raised garden beds, etc. I watch things through their first spring, if that is the chosen time to plant. Watering will then commence during the first summer at a rate of 1 bucket, per plant, per week. This is a rough rule of thumb. Days of 29 degrees C, with strong wind, are far harder on new plantings than 39 degrees C and calm. Detrimental weather may mean watering twice a week. If our planting is done in summer, the same watering program applies, but vigilance on watching is the key. Over watering is rarely a factor during this time. Remember also, the objective is to encourage a deep root system. Roots will head down, chasing water, if there is not a constant supply of surface moisture.

Given our lockdown status restricting travel, staying at home this summer might offer a great chance to give warm month planting a go. “

*(Ed's note: Well this is food for thought isn't it? I have found our recent summers just far too hot and dry to keep plants which have been planted in mid-Spring alive. We watered our butts off to keep things going, to no avail and at great expense, both in terms of plant purchases and watering costs. I decided that summer watering with a 22 000 L tank and added town water when the tank ran dry was unsustainable into the future, both in terms of cost and time. There are a lot of things which come into play here, soil type, fertilizer regime, root competition, garden size, plant species choice and microclimate being a few. Despite more severe frosts this winter in our garden than over the last several winters, there was very noticeable plant growth here towards the end of July into August with, I assume, the rainfall in June of 123mm and 170mm in July being the main promotant.*

*I think we need to keep very detailed records of the microclimate within our own gardens (weekly soil temperatures, frosts and daily rainfall along with growth spurt observances, over say 10 years, to come up with an indicator for ourselves, and even then it will still come back to seasonality. Take advantage of a good season—but this is difficult. The BoM long range forecasts allow us to think ahead but our soils are often too hard to dig at the time we would like to until after the rains set in, and then they may become too wet. This is the first year after about five when we have been able to dig a hole in our sand-clay soil. We have very short warnings of thunderstorm dumps. I guess these are just an added benefit—or are they what we have to hope for and keep our fingers crossed?)*

Michael Burston commented favourably on Phillip Vaughan's post:

“I totally agree Phillip. Another plus for summer planting is vertebrate pest assistance. The browsers are hungriest in winter and newly planted trees and shrubs can be pulled out by the roots. Marsupials, rodents and dare I say it, Deer.”

Another response was:

“I find that if I plant in spring, I need to water through the next two summers. If I plant in autumn, I only have to water through one summer. Watering usually takes about 8 hours per week every week (depending on how many new plants I have), so I do the bulk of my planting in autumn.”

*What are other member's experiences? Do you agree with Phillip? Send me a few lines for the next newsletter. Ed.*

## Get to know your Committee

### Joanne's garden journey

I was born in country Victoria and moved about four times before I was 10. Dad grew tomatoes and kept moving to find better "ground". My earliest garden influence was a social one. On family visits the first thing you did, after a cup of tea or a cordial, was to be shown around the garden. We would visit one garden regularly – Mrs Middleton's in Finley – we would be shown about whilst the "men" would discuss engineering bits and pieces. She had a messy garden full of flowers and a bee hive, so she was a bit of a star in the 1970s to have had bees in town. She was the boss of the house, the engineering business and the family.

I've always been curious and I suppose Mum and Dad's adventures were sparked by their curiosity - I remember Dad bringing back a "lucky plant" from Hawaii – at a time when I suppose, it wasn't much trouble to bring back plants from overseas and I also remember our attempts at propagating Queensland bottle trees (*Brachychiton rupestris*) from the seed of a tree planted by the Chinese on a property along the Murrumbidgee. There is nothing left of the house or any other evidence of the first white settlers on this property, other than the Queensland bottle tree. We still have a stand of about five Bottle Trees that we propagated from that tree at the front gate of the property that I've known the longest.

In High School, we were sent to Sydney for a work experience stint – two weeks in Warriewood – where we were introduced to city living and employment possibilities. I was asked what I was interested in doing or being? Goodness knows, we weren't really encouraged to develop interests - you went to school, you had jobs to do on the farm, that was it. I said to the co-ordinator that I had some plants on the back verandah that I liked looking after. So he sent me to a plant nursery in Warriewood. I was seated with a lady who didn't speak much English to prune the same plant for five days. When I made conversation I was laughed at. After five days I was sent to clear cob-webs from under tables for a day, now realising that there were probably quite a few funnel webs that would have loved those conditions. My horticultural journey wasn't off to a flying start. Since that time, I've always ensured that any work experience student at any work place I've been in, is well looked after with a variety of different tasks at all levels, so that if there is a possibility, if the interest is there, that a spark of interest may be ignited.

During my last year at school, I was losing the use of my legs and they finally discovered a tumour pressing against my spine, and after three weeks in hospital and discovering that I would walk again, I decided against going to university and moved away to TAFE to study business studies, just one year, then I could travel.

I got a job in a bank away from home, then moved to Sydney, then overseas and back to Sydney again. I suppose that all of this time I had some interest in plants, but there was certainly an interest that was fostered in the outdoors and nature. On returning to Sydney, after a couple of different jobs I joined Australian Geographic and revelled in the passion and curiosity that all of the staff and experts had in their respective fields and when we finally had a home of our own, I started gardening. Our first home was a 100 acre weekender in the Upper Hunter, with a fascinating garden and plant history. The previous owner had lived on the land with her family for 100 years and you could see the results of the careful management of the land and the evolution of their garden over that time. It was like an archaeological discovery from the lumps of petrified wood as edges around the half round garden bed on either side of the pathway to the front door, to the collection of photographs and teaching materials that the previous owner had left in the house. Evidence of her correspondence with George Althofer, the founder of Nindethana seeds and the Burrendong Botanic Garden and Arboretum outside of Wellington in NSW - she was testing what native seeds and plants would grow in her area for him. Looking at photographs of her garden and speaking with her about the bath water being bucketed out onto the garden, school materials showing that as a one-roomed school teacher she had a flourishing garden around her country classroom and was part of the NSW Gould League, and CSIRO bird watching projects. She was an amazing lady who would travel independently on "jolly trips" to places all over NSW & Victoria documenting plants and birds with her Gould League friends.

On this 100 acres, I attempted to grow poplars, a sentimental choice, remembering them from my first childhood home – they died – no water. I tried fruit trees – many including a grafted "fruit salad" tree that took six months to arrive - it died – not enough water and wrong soil. I tried native trees and mulched them with mushroom compost – of course they died. I planted a native daisy said to be suitable for dry areas, so I didn't water it - it died. All valuable learning experiences and something that reminds me, to remind others, not to be dissuaded, just try again, you're learning.

We sold the 100 acres as the coal mines were moving too close and there was no political will or enough community interest to stop a corporate goliath. Unfortunately, this still continues. In fact the old homestead, garden and carefully managed land is now an open mine pit, with the only remaining evidence that we or others, including the Aboriginal people who were the first custodians of this land, is a lonely gum tree that we planted on the top of a rise.

We then bought a house in Sydney and I can remember being so excited about the garden – we had two of my pre-requisites a *Xanthorrhoea* that would have been at least 2 metres tall and an *Angophora costata*, the salmon coloured gum that is iconic to the area. I started a garden journal, I wanted to know what all of the local plants were, I bought heaps of native tube stock, even rare ones and planted and created a wildflower meadow. I toured all of the local botanical haunts and discovered that Betty Maloney, well known for her naturalistic garden design, virtually lived around the corner. I visited her garden during one of the garden open days and if she was in the garden whilst I was walking past, I'd have a chat - she was so welcoming.

Before the house was sold, I visited and toured through the rooms, where you could still see her gorgeous illustrations and I remember her telling me how she had painted them one dot at a time. It really is a very small world, because the father of a good friend of mine had known Betty well and had been gifted many of her drawings. She didn't sell her illustrations, she gave them away and there hasn't been an exhibition as such, although in 1988 to celebrate the Bicentenary, Esso Australia bought her whole collection of 86 watercolour illustrations of the Proteaceae of the Sydney Region for the State Library. Since then I have found two black and white illustrations and one colour illustration online that were misidentified as prints and bought them. I wasn't sure that they were real and I didn't care, because the illustration or print was lovely. They include a *Persoonia angulata*, a *Eucalyptus lehmanni* and *Banksia sphaerocarpa*. I've had them conserved by the University of Melbourne and they have been confirmed to be real illustrations and I'm thrilled to not only have something that is very rare indeed but to have something so beautiful by a gardener and artist that I'd met.

After leaving Sydney we ended up back in the Riverina and I thought that every tree-changer from the North Shore of Sydney learns Garden Design – didn't they? I was and am still a romantic. I really enjoyed the units of garden design that I studied at Wodonga TAFE. Then one of the first people I met when moving down here introduced me to Jenny Davidson and the APS and that was it really, I'd found my tribe. I was also on a *Brachychiton rupestris* tangent. The *rupestris* in our garden (one of the reasons I wanted the house) had watermelon seeds popping up everywhere underneath, but they weren't watermelons, they were *rupestris* seedlings. So began my journey into potting them up, finding out what they were, whether they may be something special, perhaps the next 'Robyn Gordon' grevillea? I spoke to an expert in QLD who suggested that they'd probably crossed with a Kurrajong, *Brachychiton populneus* and that the seedlings could be a rough leaved version of a Kurrajong, or some could prove to be *rupestris*, we wouldn't know until they grew out. So the kids' sandpit was repurposed and the 600 seedlings potted up and brought inside when we went on holidays, to keep them out of the frost. I even called to leave them a phone message, hoping that they were well and growing! I told you I was a romantic or perhaps simply crazy. It was a difficult road to convert people into Kurrajong-lovers when they're more familiar with the street tree that is abused by trucks and cars and not recognised for its hardiness and wonderful shade qualities in the home garden. Since that time they've also been recommended as a fire wise plant, helpful when designing a garden that may be open to ember attack.

As I was touring markets I thought that I needed something other than my trees, so started to make some garden art. I did a couple of welding workshops and decided that I wasn't much good at that and became more creative with other "cold join" methods. At this same time my good friend Karen Retra captured my curiosity with her enthusiasm for native bees and my first question was where do they live and this led to the possibility of making a home for them in my garden, that was also a piece of garden art. My endeavours at metalwork had one deadline each year, the Rutherglen Art Show and aside from chasing after children, this was my one creative aim each year. I created a home for native bees, titled "Life Bee In It" and lo and behold it won an achievement award for a completely unintentional addition to the sculpture – but a pub meal was a lovely prize.

With my interest in naturalistic design being further fostered by the garden design course, I was on a journey of discovery that led me to Design Fest in Melbourne where I was introduced to Philip Johnson and it must have been a "brave" day, because I had asked him about his design for Chelsea, it having just been announced that he was designing the garden for the following year. I asked him if he had any sculptural elements in the design and he asked why. I told him about the home for native bees, sent him some pictures etc. and he said he was interested, but they are only allowed to feature so many animals in the garden, he'd have to think about it. I sent him the dimensions etc. and about a month before the container left I rang and said "no worries if it's a no, just thought I'd check". He replied that it was a yes, but they couldn't guarantee that it would be part of the garden until they started constructing the garden. So we started building a packing case ready to deliver the sculpture. We decided to travel over to England, just in case it was included in the garden, to visit Ian's family and go to the Chelsea Flower Show, a real bucket list item for me.

The container arrived safely, I was told when to be there for set up and we rocked up still not knowing if it would be included or not. The most amazing experience of all was to see behind the scenes set-up of the Chelsea Flower Show. The people, the transformation, the detail, the beauty and the exclusivity of being allowed behind the scenes. After unpacking the box and showing them how to do the final set up, we helped with whatever we could – I was asked to water the plants and I've never been so nervous to water a plant in my life, each *Brachychiton rupestris* had been especially selected in Spain for its size, shape and condition and imported for the show. Once again my life collides with the Queensland Bottle Tree. I was told that the sculpture will definitely be part of the garden and in fact they'd lose points if it wasn't included, I simply couldn't believe it. The garden proved to be a huge hit and they were ready for the judges – the team are on their hands and knees snipping plants with scissors – my sculpture is there, not front and centre, but there. The first day we're there and invited past thousands of visitors to come into the garden. The next day the winners were announced and I'm watching online, we simply don't believe it, Best in Show, first Australian Garden ever to win and in the Centenary year of the show. I proudly have a framed picture of the sculpture in place with a copy of the award-winning certificate, that I must remember to rescue if the house is ever in danger of burning down, along with the Betty Maloney illustrations.

We were in Albury by that stage and I had a garden to create virtually from scratch – there were four standard roses in the front garden and that is all. In the back garden there was a whole terrace to fill and of course the row of hakeas that were there started to die, so they went and we started again. I moved plants from pots to garden and into pots again. Some

exotics were saved and we have a pollinator garden on the back terrace. Following a house extension, we expanded the garden a bit and then bought the block next door, only 500 sqm, primarily to stop a multi-dwelling development, but just enough to keep a budding flower farmer happy!

After a year or so of trial and error, this flower farmer decided to begin a business course especially designed for women called Global Sisters. I analysed my skills, talents and interests and decided to grow flowers for seed. Starting off with exotic flowers and some natives, it wasn't long before my interest and that of the customers, directed me towards more native flower seeds and so I am moving in this direction. In the garden by myself I miss the social contact, but for now my little business allows me to pursue my interests in line with my ethics and values without being dictated to by bureaucrats who have power and ego as their prime motivator. In four years Murray will have finished school and the title on my business card may again change, I have no idea, but like a seed, the strength and direction lie within, just waiting for the right conditions to flourish.

My garden today is a collection of memories, people and places, that sometimes come together into something that might be regarded as "design", but in others it is definitely "experimental" or a "work in progress". The most important part of the garden to me is the value of the connections with people that plants allow and always tell the kids, visitors, or the dog, what that significance of each particular plant is, the person or place or environment that it reminds me of. My garden journey continues.

*Joanne Diver*



***Joanne's Bee Hotel, part of Trailfinders Australian Garden which won Best in Show and a gold medal at the Chelsea Flower Show, 2013***

Melbourne-based landscape designer Phillip Johnson designed the winning exhibit. Trailfinders (the name of the display garden) was designed to illustrate transitions between the house and garden, and make statements about habitat creation and biodiversity, water capture and conservation, the responsible use of recycled materials, solar power and bushfire suppression systems. Timber boardwalks and stone pathways connected different areas of the design, that included a beach, a billabong, a series of waterfalls, a mighty stone gorge architecturally designed studio. Three distinct planting zones – wet, temperate and dry – represented botanical diversity across Australia. A nesting hive for native bees, designed and built by Albury artist, Joanne Diver, was also included.

The Chelsea Flower Show is run by the Royal Horticultural Society, the UK's leading gardening charity. Held in the grounds of the Chelsea Hospital, it is Britain's second largest and most prestigious flower show.

## Your Committee:

**President:** John van Riet 5725 7207 helenvanriet@bigpond.com  
**Secretary:** Alison Earp 5729 7518 kalisetptyltd@gmail.com  
**Treasurer:** Arthur Meyers 5728 1654 pianoman@netc.net.au  
**Membership Officer:** Gillian Anderson 5766 2397 pdga280@bigpond.com  
**Newsletter:** Glenda Datson (02) 6020 8104 gdatson@bigpond.net.au  
**APS Vic Representative:** Helen van Riet 5725 7207

## Non Official Roles:

Joan Cochrane, *Supper roster*, 5728 1654 Alan Gibb 5727 3362  
Joanne Diver 0412 985501 Jenny Davidson (02) 6032 8442  
Michael O'Sullivan 5725 1784 Helen Wrigley 5722 2824  
Rosemary Buchanan 0428 998 336 Therese Graham, Specimen Table, 0404 563 614

## Shows, conferences, plant sales and other items of interest 2021

*Important: Please check APS Victoria website for cancellations due to Covid restrictions*

**Cancelled—25 & 26 September 2021** - APS Grampians Group host APS Victoria COM Meeting.

**2 & 3 October 2021** – Wartook Gardens - Open Days for Wimmera Healthcare Foundation. BBQ lunch, morning and afternoon teas available.

**Cancelled—2 & 3 October 2021** - APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall.

**9 October 2021** - APS Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase, Echuca Masonic Lodge Hall, 426 High Street, Echuca. A huge flower display, plant sales, floral art, Native Bonsai, basket weaving and other displays and demonstrations. 9am-pm.

**16 October 2021** - APS Mitchell Annual Flower Expo and Sale, Memorial Hall, Kilmore.

**23 & 24 October 2021** - APS Ballarat Spring Flower Show. Robert Clark Centre, Ballarat Botanic Gardens, Gillies Street, Ballarat. 10am-4pm.

**13 & 14 November 2021** - Garden DesignFest, Metro Melbourne & Mornington Peninsula

**20 & 21 November 2021** -Garden DesignFest, Regional Victoria: Ballarat, Euroa, Geelong and Macedon areas.

**11-16 September 2022**, ANPSA Biennial Conference 2022, Kiama, New South Wales. Preliminary details of the Conference, pre- and post-Conference tours and the beautiful town of Kiama can be found on the APS (NSW) website. <https://austplants.com.au/ANPSA-Biennial-Conference-2022>

**15 & 16 October 2022** - 14<sup>th</sup> FJC Rogers Seminar. Topic: Fabulous Peas (the typical 'pea-flowered' plants from the sub-family Faboideae). Venue: York on Lilydale in Mt Evelyn. Expressions of interest and queries to: [fabulouspeas2022@gmail.com](mailto:fabulouspeas2022@gmail.com)

**If you intend to attend any of these events, please visit the APS Victoria website to check the latest updates in case of cancellations.**