

Australian Plants Society (Wangaratta Inc)

October 2022 Newsletter

MEETINGS:

Venue: Masonic Lodge, 101 Appin Street, Wangaratta.

Meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of even months at 7pm.

Visitors are always welcome.

Thurs. 27th Oct.

Guest speaker: Chris Clarke, APS Victoria. Topic: Alpine Plants.

COMMITTEE MEETING:

Wed. 16th November 4.30pm. At van Riet's.

OUTINGS:

Sun. 27th November Christmas break-up at the McLean garden in Benalla.

Bring something 'Christmassy' to share and BYO lunch and folding chair.

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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.

This is a reminder that you can access the latest "*Growing Australian*" magazine through the APS Victoria website. For those who may not be familiar with this, here's the sequence: <https://apsvic.org.au>

Open the **Members** area with the password **22&epacris** . Scroll across the headers in the Members area & click on "**Growing Australian**". Open the latest edition posted here—it is listed as **Sep 22**, and click on the date.

Getting to know your Committee

From Janice Jones—your new President

Developing an interest in Growing Australian Native Plants

I grew up in Merewether NSW and lived a ten minute walk from the beach. I loved living by the sea and still miss it. I knew lots about rock platforms.

However, in 1975 we found ourselves moving to Alice Springs and what a change that was! Instead of staying for a couple of years as we had planned, we stayed for 22. We managed to buy a house; it was just after the Darwin cyclone and housing was very scarce. Our garden was mostly baked earth with citrus trees, kurrajongs, white cedars, oleanders, a date tree, poinsettias, lantanas, roses and a fountain. It was on a corner block and bigger than most. It was not the garden we thought we would like to have, so after trying and failing dismally to remove one of the oleanders we decided to leave it as it was. We were told it had won a prize in the town's gardening competition. We were somewhat amazed when our son's friends used to say 'You have a lovely house and garden'. Most of the houses in Alice were government houses and very few had been privately built. Some of the plants died through neglect on our part.

Living in such an amazing and beautiful landscape and with very little gardening to do meant we had lots of time to explore it with all the people who decided it was time to come and visit us and also see the Centre. So armed with guide books and maps we set off to find out all about the area where we now lived.

After one very big rain when our garden was flooded with water deep enough for our son to float about on an air bed, our baked earth burst into bloom with masses of small flowers and grasses. It reverted to normal after a couple of years.

We did grow some native plants: an Acacia peuce, loads of Sturt's desert peas, grevilleas and bush tomatoes and quite a few more that I have forgotten.

When we decided to live in Wangaratta and bought a house, we now had another garden and it was time to start learning about what to plant in this area, so we joined APS. Where else would you go to find out what to plant in the garden!!



A corner of Janice's Wangaratta garden

Outing to Rosemary Buchanan's 'patch' at Edi Upper

Rosemary has written to participants:

“Thank-you for such a lovely day. I really enjoyed having you at my place and exploring my bush. There were many plants discovered and many mentioned. Thank-you Bernie for the explanation of the difference between the Leopard orchid and the Tiger, and that fascinating snippet about the bisexual Early Nancy. I'm still not sure about my naked leaf pea. It is this making of connection between the plant on the ground and the botanical name that I am not good at.

We lamented the absence of such people as Allan Gibb and Jan Hall who were so full of knowledge on days such as yesterday. It occurs to me that we need to be a bit more methodical in our plant identification. You will all understand I speak as one with very flawed knowledge, but I think we would all enjoy our garden forays more if we had more knowledge. I did try to make a list of plants that I thought we might find up the fire track. I'm not sure how many of you spotted that.

Bearing in mind that we have a huge amount of knowledge within the group I am hoping we can explore ways of spreading it about more. I know you, Mary, our newest member, was very impressed by our knowledge, but you were being far too kind with some of us who are mere dilattantes!

I'll stop my palaver now, hoping you get my drift of thought and acknowledge what pleasure I get from my inclusion in the group, and my desire to know more.”

Plants observed by the group:

Common name	Botanical name
Thin-leaf or Snake Wattle	<i>Acacia aculeatissima</i>
Ploughshare wattle	<i>Acacia gunnii</i>
Mosquito orchid	<i>Acianthus exsertus</i>
Honey Pots	<i>Acrotriche serrulata</i>
Chocolate Lily	<i>Arthropodium strictum</i> (in bud)
Prickly Woodruff	<i>Asperula scoparia</i>
Daphne Heath	<i>Brachyloma daphnoides</i>
Pink fingers	<i>Caladenia carnea</i>
Dusky fingers	<i>Caladenia fuscata</i>
Rock Fern	<i>Cheilanthes austrotenuifolia</i>
Sticky Everlasting	<i>Chrysocephalum viscosum</i>
Austral Bear's Ears	<i>Cymbonotus preissianus</i>
Gnat orchid	<i>Cyrtostylis reniformis</i>
Narrow-leaf Bitter pea	<i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>
Small-leaf Parrot-pea	<i>Daviesia phyllicoides</i> <i>syn. retorta</i>
Leopard orchid	<i>Diuris pardina</i>
Golden Moths	<i>Diurus chryseopsis</i>
Tall Sundew	<i>Drosera auriculata</i>
Pale Sundew	<i>Drosera hookeri</i>
Apple Box	<i>Eucalyptus bridgesiana</i>
Broad-leaf Peppermint	<i>Eucalyptus dives</i>
Red Stringybark	<i>Eucalyptus macrorhyncha</i>
Wax lip	<i>Glossodia major</i>

Common name	Botanical name
Twining Glycine	Glycine clandestina
Common Raspwort	Gonocarpus tetragynus
Mountain Grevillea	Grevillea alpina
Purple Coral-pea	Hardenbergia violacea
Golden Guinea flower	Hibbertia obtusifolia
Erect Guinea flower	Hibbertia riparia
Common Hovea	Hovea heterophylla
Stinking Pennywort	Hydrocotyle laxiflora
Small St. John's Wort	Hypericum gramineum
Yellow Star	Hypoxis vaginata
Australian Indigo	Indigofera australis
Many-flowered Mat-rush	Lomandra multiflora subsp. multiflora
Common Woodrush	Luzula multiflora
Weeping grass	Microlaena stipoides
Yam Daisy/Murnong	Microseris walteri (in bud)
	Poa spp.
Nodding greenhood	Pterostylis nutans
Buttercup	Ranunculus sp.
Cotton Fireweed	Senecio quadridentatus
Sun orchid	Thelymitra sp. (flower not open so unidentified)
Kangaroo grass	Themeda triandra
Twining Fringe Lily	Thysanotus patersonii
Early Nancy	Wurmbea dioica

If any one would like to check out photos of the above species, google:

<https://friendsofchiltern.org.au> then mouse over **Biodiversity** to bring up the drop-down menu and click on **Flora of Chiltern Mt Pilot NP**

Birds observed or heard:

Weebill	Pied Currawong
Striated Pardalote	White-throated Treecreeper
Western Gerygone	Willy Wagtail
Eastern Spinebill	Eastern Rosella
Magpie	Noisy Friarbird
Rufous Whistler	Red Wattlebird
Fuscous Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush
Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Pallid Cuckoo
Australian Raven	Superb Blue Wren
Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Eastern Whipbird

From one of our members:

Geoff Barrow

I've been asked to describe what got me interested in Australian plants and the reality is that it's not just plants but animals, insects and the environment in general that gets me going. Amazingly and just as I write this there is a pair of Regent honeyeaters busy in the small Redbox tree just outside the window, as if to emphasize my interest in the natural world.

I grew up on a small mixed farm in South East England, the youngest of a family of eight children. The general talk around the dinner table included observations of wildlife and plants, the first primroses of spring, which birds were nesting and the arrival of migrant birds like swallows and cuckoos. Every day on the farm or travelling around the district included unconscious observations of country life, which became in turn, my contribution to the family conversation. In the field fifty metres from our six hundred year old farmhouse home, was the "Bomb Crater", a circular pond, the reminder of the air raids of the war. This was my favorite place where I went pond dipping, discovering the fascinating world of wetland creatures.

Arriving in Queensland in 1969 on the Sunshine Coast I found a whole new world to explore from the tough Coastal Wallum country with its plants and wildlife adapted to nutrient poor soils to the lush green rainforest in the gullies of the nearby hills, all with their unique array of plants and wildlife. Five years later we moved to Quambatook in the Mallee. What a contrast. Dry sandy soil and stunted Mallee trees with huge lignotubers providing insurance against fire. The 1982-83 drought put me out of business as rural contractor and I applied for and was offered the position as Ranger in Charge of Albatutya Regional Park on the edge of the Big Desert. Suddenly I found I was employed to do a job that I would have paid to experience. Now I had to knuckle down and learn the names and habits of a whole new suite of plants and wildlife surrounding a drying lake system and arid desert heathlands.

For the first time fire management became a high priority and I learnt that in the dry heathlands fire came through hot and quick, razing all the vegetation to the ground. However this was not the disaster it first seemed as fire here effectively reset the clock. First, Mallee trees began to send up epicormic shoots from lignotubers and Banksia and other seedlings germinated in the ashy sand. In the first few years short lived plants sprang up, flowered and set seed to restock the soil seed bank. Next, shrubs took over and had their day in the sun until, eventually, the taller Mallee trees began to dominate, all becoming a cycle reset by fire every twenty years or so.

One of the challenges at Albatutya was to find a way to replant the *Callitris preissii* forest that once clothed the dunes surrounding the Lake. With no funds allocated for this task, we collected seed and scrounged enough material to build a small shade house and, in the first year, grew and planted out seven hundred trees. This small enterprise introduced me to the skills of propagating native plants.

After a few years in the west of the State I moved to Wangaratta. My area of management included the Warby Range State Park, Killawarra Forest and the Lower Ovens State Forest. Over the next two decades my role changed but responsibility for land management in the Warby Range remained the fixed element most of the time. Each area has its own special plants; from iconic Grass trees, Ironbark trees and the giant Redgums of the river country.



Land management requires a good understanding of how natural systems operate, how each species is connected and interdependent, much of which is becoming clearer as new research is published. I have derived great pleasure out of learning about the natural system I have worked and lived in, but know there is still a lot to find out.

Trust for Nature (Victoria) is a not-for-profit organisation that works with private landholders to protect native plants and animals. Two-thirds of Victoria is freehold, making the protection of habitat vital in preventing extinction. They work with landholders to place voluntary conservation covenants on properties and buy and sell land which has conservation values through their Revolving Fund.

2022 marks the 50 year anniversary of the Trust for Nature and their newsletter Edition 76 2022 celebrates this by remembering some of the early conservation champions who protected habitat in perpetuity. And our very own Helen and John van Riet are remembered in this newsletter as follows:

Smiles all round.

It's hard to wipe the grin from pioneer covenantors Helen and John van Riet's faces as they talk about their beloved property in Victoria's north east. In 1984, when living in Wangaratta, they bought 16 ha near Cheshunt in the King River Valley. The block was three quarters natural bush with the front four hectares cleared for a house site. "As we walked over it, we noted the variety of plants, the animals that lived there and the steep rise to the back with several gullies," said John. "We called the property 'Bringalongagrin', based on a property 'Bringalong' we had noted on our travels then added "agrin", for people to put a smile on their faces as they entered." The couple spent four years in their spare time building a 12-square kit home, camping at first and then moving into a caravan until the house was finished. They planted a native garden around the house, added rainwater tanks, had a bore put in, and installed solar panels. They had many visitors to their new home including members of the Australian Plants Society of which they were members. On a field day with the Society in the 1980s, a fieldworker for the Trust suggested they covenant the property. "We did so in 1991, becoming the first covenant in north east Victoria." The couple owned the property for 21 years. Weeds and feral deer were the main challenges they faced. "Native orchids were special in spring and the birdlife was a highlight with honeyeaters arriving after flowering of the new plants, as well as the magpies and laughing kookaburras who always brought a chuckle to the happy site." The couple also loved to share the benefits of the bush they enjoyed. Being involved with church, they invited small groups to retreats—using a labyrinth they laid



Top: "Bringalongagrin" – Helen and John named the property to make visitors smile.

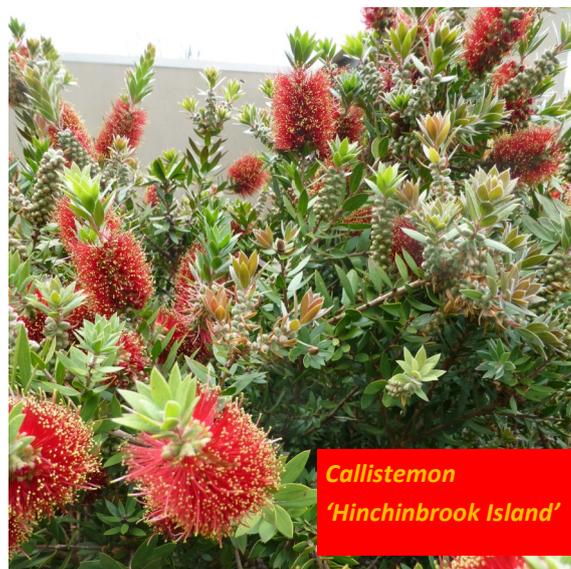
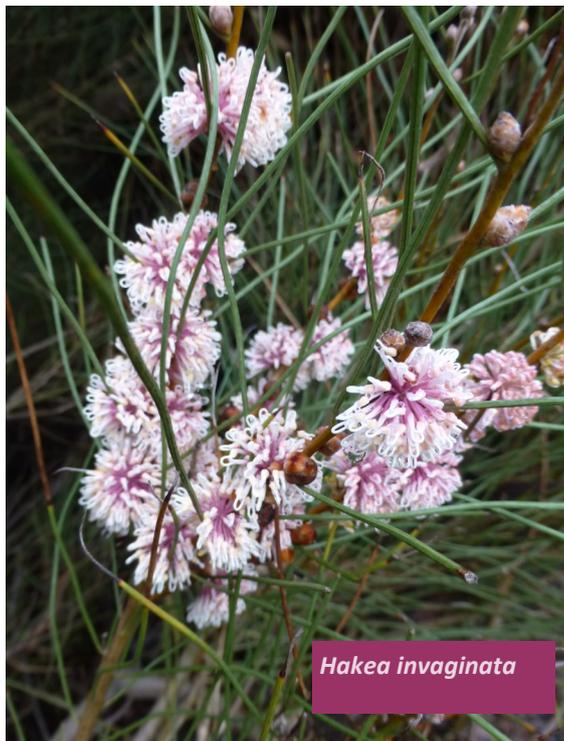
Centre: A labyrinth on the property was used for meditative walking.

Bottom: John van Riet on the Cheshunt property. Images: Helen and John van Riet.

out in the paddock for meditative walking. “We also invited people to sit in the bush, be still and become aware of its healing smells and sounds.” It was with a heavy heart that they sold the property in 2005. “Personally, my wife and I benefited greatly from our time there. The property provided the opportunity for refreshment, reflection and meditation, helping us to see the meaning of life more clearly. The covenant will ensure the protection of plants and animal life that we came so much to appreciate and celebrate.

Colour in the garden this month

Datson garden



A daisy (can anyone id this? Supposedly native, It roots from nodes on runners, with Dampiera diversifolia



In flower this month

Podubinski garden (PB) and Jones garden (JJ):



Acacia glaucoptera (Clay Wattle). An unusual and attractive spreading shrub that varies in form from spreading prostrate or semi prostrate 30 cm tall to an erect shrub 1.2 m high with unique flat foliage.



Acacia denticulosa (Sandpaper wattle)

Acacia denticulosa's common name 'Sandpaper wattle' is derived from the scabrous phyllodes which feel just like sandpaper to the touch. A hardy, drought tolerant plant, *Acacia denticulosa* is listed as vulnerable on the EPBC ACT 1999.



Dampiera diversifolia putting on a lovely display in Janice's garden. A Western Australian native, *Dampiera diversifolia* is a **perennial groundcover** that blooms masses of purple-blue flowers through Spring and Summer. It makes a wonderful hardy groundcover and looks spectacular cascading over a raised garden border or retaining wall, especially when mass planted.

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY WANGARATTA INC

Annual Membership Application 1/7/2022 - 30/6/2023

Name/s _____

Address (Postal) _____

Postcode _____

Telephone _____ Mobile _____

Email _____

In order for each member of APS Wangaratta to be covered by insurance, it is necessary to apply for both membership of APS Wangaratta **AND** APS Victoria. The option of joining only APS Wangaratta applies to those who have joined APS Victoria separately, or who have joined another APS district group through which they have already paid the APS Victoria membership component for the coming financial year.

Please tick as applicable:

- * I/We wish to receive our newsletter by email
- * I/We are applying as new members

APS Wangaratta and APS Victoria Single \$47 Family \$54 Student \$36

APS Wangaratta Only Single \$12 Family \$14 Student \$10

Optional payment for receipt of the ANPSA National Magazine "Australian Plants"

(4 editions per annum) \$15

Total Payment: \$.....

Payment by:

- * Cash
- * Cheque (Payable to APS Wangaratta), or
- * Direct Deposit

To: Bendigo Bank

Account Name: Australian Plants Society Wangaratta

BSB: 633000 Account Number 122784283

Surname

Please return a copy of this membership form to our Treasurer - Joanne Diver: divers@aapt.net.au

