

Australian Plants Society Wangaratta Inc. February 2024 Newsletter

Meetings are held in the Masonic Lodge Hall, 101 Appin Street, Wangaratta, @ 7pm, usually on the 4th Thursday of months of February, March, April, May, June, August, September, October & November. This year our meeting and outing dates have changed, due to the Easter Holiday break, and Anzac Day. PLEASE READ THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND NOTE THE CHANGES FROM OUR NORMAL SCHEDULE!!!
The next meeting is on Thursday February 22nd. Guest Speaker will be Andy Kimber, and the topic will be Fungal Root Rot in the Warby Ovens National Park & threat to the iconic *Xanthorrhoea glauca* species [grass trees]. Details are on page 3.

Outings Visits to local gardens and places of natural beauty are organised on a Saturday or Sunday following the monthly meetings. This year there are some important changes to the planned program for March & April.

Propagation Days are held on selected Saturdays in the warmer months. The final one for this summer was held on 10th February. We may be organising some ad-hoc pricking-out days into Autumn, in readiness for the Off-Grid Living Festival.

Visitors are always welcome.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2024

DATE	EVENT	DETAILS
FEBRUARY		
Thursday 22 nd	Club meeting & Guest Speaker	Andy Kimber. <i>Phytophthora cinnamomii</i> [fungal root rot] in the Warby-Ovens National Park & threat to <i>Xanthorrhoea glauca</i> [grass trees] Details on Page 3.
Saturday 24 th	Garden Visit	Outing to the garden of Philippa and Neil Duggan, Boweya. Early evening garden walk and shared BBQ tea. From. 6pm. Details on page 4.
MARCH		
Saturday 23 rd	Garden visit	Outing to the garden of John and Trish Gibbons, Mt Beauty. Including tour of the local Landcare Rehabilitation Project. Details on page 9.
Thursday 28 th	NO MEETING	THERE WILL NOT BE A MEETING THIS MONTH AS THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF THE EASTER HOLIDAY WEEKEND.
Sunday 31 st	NO OUTING	THIS OUTING DATE HAS BEEN MOVED FORWARD TO SATURDAY 23RD MARCH, DUE TO THE EASTER HOLIDAY WEEKEND.
APRIL		
Saturday 6 th and Sunday 7 th	OFF GRID LIVING FESTIVAL	CHILTERN – Information and publicity & plants for sale. Volunteers required for both days and setting up on Friday 5 th . Details on page 7.
Thursday 18 th	Club meeting	Guest speaker - Lisa Farnsworth – The Winton Wetlands Rehabilitation Project.
Sunday 21 st	OPEN GARDEN	12 noon to 4pm. 475 Shanley Street, Coordinated by Greta Valley Landcare Group. To encourage establishment of Gardens for Wildlife' in Wangaratta district. We will have some plants for sale. See page11
Thursday 25 th	ANZAC DAY	NO MEETING.
MAY		
Thursday 23 rd	Club Meeting & Guest Speaker	Guest Speaker - Sophie Enders. <i>Gardens for Wildlife</i> .
Sunday 26 th	Outing	Outing to Winton Wetlands - Leader – Lisa Farnsworth.
JUNE		
Wednesday 5 th	Committee meeting	5.30pm at the Masonic Hall. Appin Street
Thursday 27 th	Club Meeting & Guest Speaker	Guest presenter – Isabel Young. <i>Dyeing materials using native plants</i> .
Saturday 29 th	Workshop	9.30am – 12.30pm. Workshop with Isabel Young. <i>Dyeing materials using native plants</i> . @ 475 Shanley Street Wangaratta South.

CHANGE TO LOG-IN PROCEDURE FOR APS VICTORIA WEBSITE

The Website of APS Victoria is a terrific resource for members and the general public. Much of the website material is publicly available.

There is also a Members Only section. This gives you access to the seed bank, event planning aids, rules and regulations, "Growing Australian Magazine" etc.

There used to be a password to access this area. The system has now become more secure, and you will need to use the email address you used when you signed up as a member of APS Wangaratta & APS Victoria, and your Membership Number. You will also find your Membership Number on the front of the yellow mailing envelope in which you received your "Growing Australian" magazine.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday 22nd February, @ 7pm
Masonic Hall, Appin Street.

Guest Speaker – Andy Kimber

There is an ongoing and growing threat of *Phytophthora cinnamomi* to Australian plants, including in the Warby Ovens National Park. This fungal disease kills a range of species, including our iconic grass trees.

Andy will present an overview from a layman's perspective, including research and ways that its impact can be restrained or minimised.



Andy Kimber & Ian Minns in Warby Ovens National Park. November 2023.



Andy's presentation will include ways that we may be able to help stop the spread, and become more attuned to our own behaviour during our visits to the valuable and irreplaceable areas of natural beauty on our doorstep.



GARDEN OUTING & SHARED BBQ TEA

SATURDAY 24TH FEBRUARY

To the garden of PHILIPPA & NEIL DUGGAN

1127 Boweya Rd, Boweya

TIME: 6.00 pm onwards.

This lovely Australian plants garden is set on the slopes of the western side of the Warby Ranges in close proximity to the Warby Ovens National Park. Meandering paths draw the visitor around the beds of carefully selected trees and shrubs. The garden is continuing to evolve with new plantings as well as established species. The well-drained soils support a terrific range of hardy and rare beauties. Mature trees provide ample shade. Patrick and Mary Ward [long-time past members of APS Wangaratta] have provided Philippa & Neil with expert advice in the choice of plants and the design of the garden. The garden was open to the Public in the Spring of 2022.

Following a tour of the garden, we will share a BBQ tea in the shade of established trees and the verandah on the western side of the house.

We will fire up the barbecue at around 7pm.

Philippa is organising chairs and tables. – Thank you Philippa!!

- WHAT TO BRING:
- BBQ meat or substitute
- A salad or sweet to share
- Drinks [soft or alcoholic]
- Drinking glass, cutlery & crockery, cup or coffee mug
- Sun protection, mozzie spray

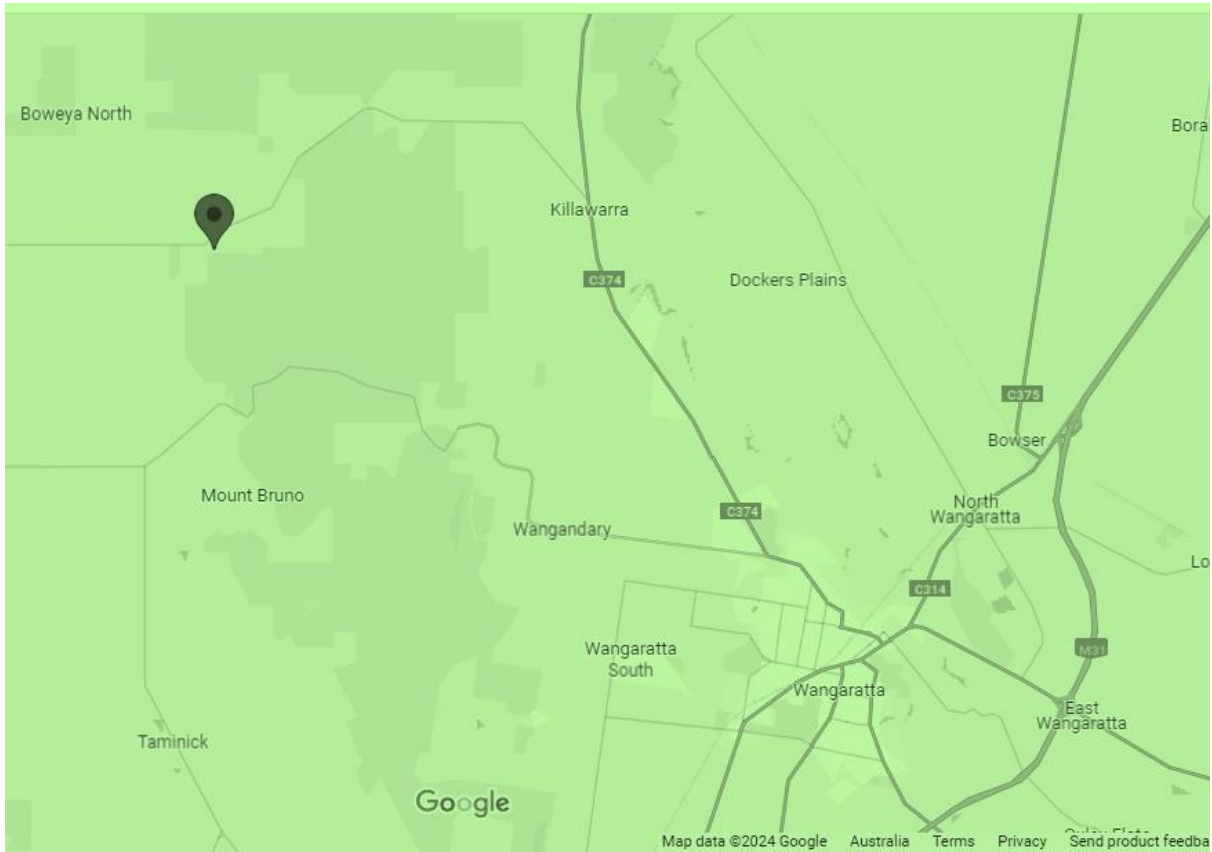
- Tea and Coffee will be provided.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

The property is 24 km from Wangaratta.

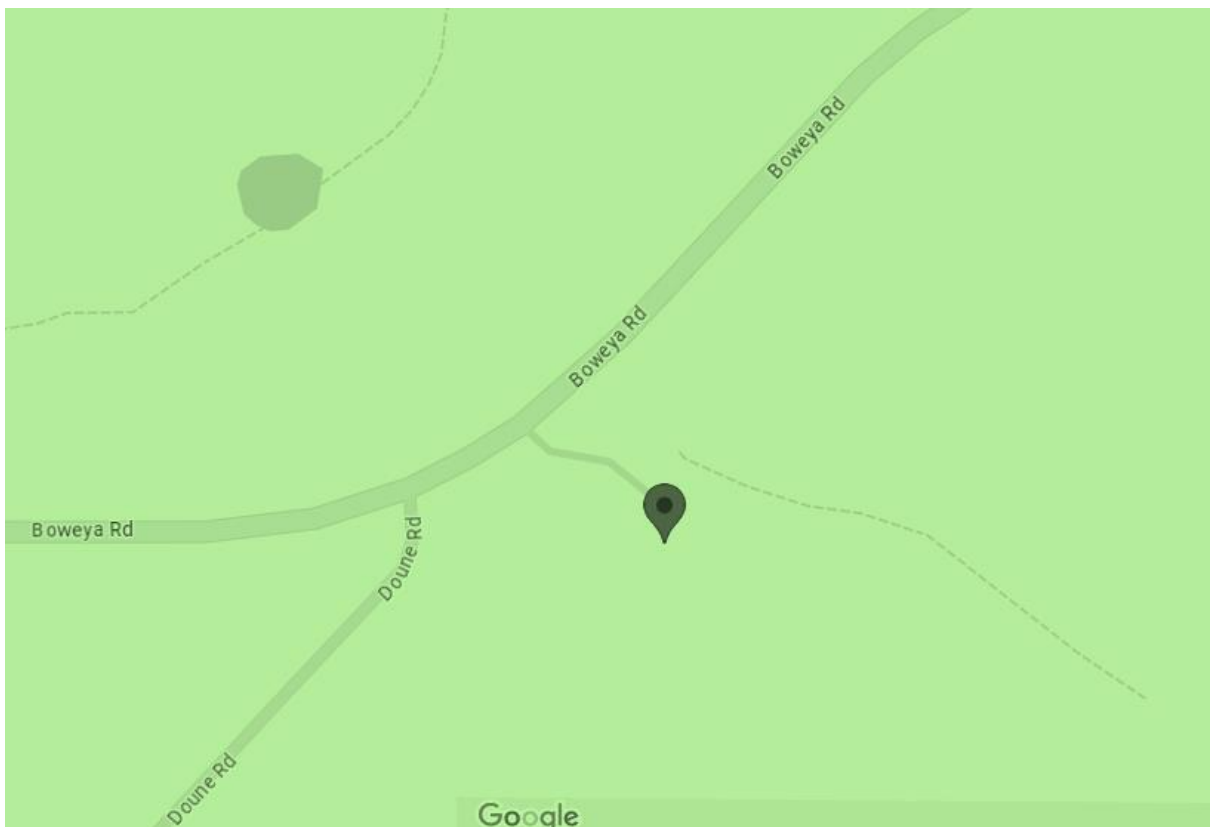
From Wangaratta --- Travel 12 km from Wangaratta on the Yarrawonga Road; Turn left into Boweya Road. Proceed 11.7 km along that road - property is on the left.

Maps on next page



1127 Boweya Road, Boweya.

Detail.



Hidden in their leaves: eucalypt dye experiments in Australia



Friday 22 March | 5 - 6pm | Free

In this one-hour talk, master weaver Liz Williamson will discuss the *Weaving Eucalypts Project* exhibition at Wangaratta Art Gallery. The project involves a community of practitioners from Australia, New Zealand and several Indian Ocean countries – practitioners linked by an engagement with nature, concern for sustainability and natural dyeing.

Williamson will briefly discuss the development of the project, key eucalypts dye experiments in Australia, the dissemination of eucalypts to Indian Ocean countries and the practitioners in the projects. Her talk includes the landmark research of Jean Carman, who was the first to systematically document the colours of Australian eucalypts by testing over 450 species and publishing her findings in 1978.

[Book now.](#)

And furthermore

DYEING MATERIALS USING NATIVE PLANTS - a sneak preview!

Our talented member, Isobel Young will lead our focus in June this year with a presentation at our meeting on June 27th, followed by a hands-on workshop on Saturday June 29th at the home of Helen & John van Riet.

OUR NOVEMBER 2023 GARDEN VISIT & CHRISTMAS BREAKUP

It was a delight to visit the lovely garden of Richard and Jenny Kjar at Killawarra.

It was a happy day, and the weather was perfect! Thank you to Richard and Jenny for their terrific hospitality.



Isobel Young has sent some lovely snaps. A few are reproduced here, and the full set, presented as a slideshow, can be seen at the following weblink -

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/XWdYA4dSYmTzYP1M7>



Advance information for our club outing on Saturday March 23rd to Mt Beauty

We have received the following information from John and Trish Gibbons in preparation for a special visit to Mt Beauty on Saturday March 23rd [*note the earlier than usual timing for our garden visit , due to Easter holidays at the end of March this year*].

Further details will be in the March newsletter.

Hi Helen,

Attached is some information on the proposed Arboretum including the location.

Also if members wish to stay overnight, I have included the following motel & caravan information. They are both close to our place. There are more options available but further away.

- Snowgum Motel, Kiewa Valley Highway Tawonga South, ph (03)57544508
- The Park, Mt Beauty (caravan park) Kiewa Valley Highway Tawonga South, ph (03)57544396

Our address is 4 Braeside Court Tawonga South 3698 Ph 0407520542

Kind Regards,

John & Trish Gibbons

The Case for establishing a Native Plant Arboretum covering the Upper Kiewa Valleys in Mt Beauty.

In direct line, Mt Beauty & Tawonga South are 12 kilometres from the peak of Mount Bogong (& the Bogong High Plains).

Mount Bogong is Victoria's highest mountain at 1986m high.

Mount Bogong & the Bogong High Plains could therefore be considered Mt Beauty's hinterland.

The flowering season for Mt Beauty & it's hinterland reaches from late July around Mt Beauty to the following March on the Bogong High Plains. This places Mt Beauty & it's hinterland in a unique position of having a very long flowering period. Because of the altitude differences there is also a very diverse range of flowering plants – many of which are either unique or have a limited provenance. There are hundreds of different varieties of plants growing throughout this environment. In fact the world's second tallest flowering plant (*Eucalyptus Delegatensis* – Alpine Ash) exists in this area.

It is for these reasons that it is ideal for an arboretum showcasing the diverse range of local native flora to be established in Mt Beauty.

The recommended site on the Kiewa River Trail has the advantage of being in a popular location regularly visited by locals and regional visitors. It also has the backdrop of Mt Bogong & surrounding mountains which directly relate to the plants in the arboretum. Due to the great range of plants & the variation in altitude & diversity of environments, not all species would be able to be represented.

The proposed project would be undertaken in stages spanning several years. One part of the recommended site already has some plants worth preserving & is an ideal starting point with a minimum of effort required to establish it. Given the nature of the project, each stage would be independent and would stand out as an enhancement of the overall trail.

1st Stage – Establish a garden area for planting local native plants (those plants found at an altitude of less than 1000m). Work to start as soon as Grant is confirmed & completed by 31st May 2024.

Work on clearing & weeding around both areas of stage 1.

In the Northern area, clear the area between the established plantation and the Blue Gums. Once cleared, spray the area with herbicide to remove remnant weeds.

Once weeds are eradicated, mark out the area for the garden bed & introduce the mounding soil.

Place retaining rocks around the perimeter of the garden bed.

Establish the paths around the garden bed (& elsewhere as required) using road base material.

Purchase & plant the Native Plants in the garden bed in designated clumps.

Mulch the garden bed with gravel mulch.

Establish signage for the project including plant labels.



**Gardens for Wildlife in Wangaratta.
Launch @ Open Garden
475 Shanley Street, Wangaratta South.
Sunday April 21st, 12 noon – 4pm.**

We have been approached by the Greta Valley Landcare Group to open our garden for the launch of this new initiative.

Entry will be free, and the Wangaratta Oxfam Group will be providing Devonshire teas.

The organisers have requested that Helen & John give an overview of the establishment and maintenance of their garden, with particular reference to Gardens For Wildlife.

We plan to provide visitors with guided tours of the garden.

There will be leftover plants from our Off-Grid Living Festival Stall which will be held at Chiltern on 6th and 7th April. We will have a small plant stall to sell off these plants before the onset of winter. Proceeds of the sales will be donated to Oxfam.

Volunteers to help with the plant stall and with the garden tours would be greatly appreciated.

We would also greatly appreciate some help with getting our garden a bit more ship-shape after the exceptionally wet and stormy summer. Please let us know if you can help.

More details in the March newsletter.

Helen & John van Riet. -- helenvanriet@bigpond.com.

From your Editor.

Please consider writing an article or sending some interesting photos to me. Short or long, every contribution adds to this Newsletter's interest and relevance to our Club. Our Newsletter belongs to all of us! Please give me a ring or text or email if you would like to discuss an idea. Thank you all!

helenvanriet@bigpond.com 04 01021448

Growling grass frog to be reintroduced to northern Victorian wetlands, after 53 years of local extinction

ABC Goulburn Murray
By Mikaela Ortolan

The growling grass frog has not been recorded at Winton Wetlands, in northern Victoria, for more than 50 years but a group of researchers is one step closer to reintroducing the endangered amphibian to its original home.

Key points:

- The growling grass frog has been extinct from Winton Wetlands since 1970
- Thirty frogs have been captured in Bendigo and transported to the wetlands
- They will be bred onsite and released into the wetlands in northern Victoria

Restoration and research manager at Winton Wetlands Lisa Farnsworth was part of a team that travelled from the wetlands to Bendigo where the frogs were found to be thriving.

There, the team spent several hours carefully capturing 30 frogs before transporting them via road to a laboratory at Winton Wetlands.

"I think we all started out really quite nervous because it was a bit cooler than we were expecting at the capture site over in Bendigo," Dr Farnsworth said.

"But once the sun set, the frogs did the right thing and popped out for us to capture."

The frogs are now in quarantine in a laboratory at Winton, where they will remain for about four weeks.

Froglets will be released in parts of the wetlands after the breeding season in November. (ABC Goulburn Murray: Mikaela Ortolan)

Winton Wetlands aquatic ecologist Lance Lloyd said the project, which stemmed from a science forum, had been several years in the making.





Lisa Farnsworth and Lance Lloyd say bringing back the species will restore critical ecological functions to the wetlands.

"We've been really working towards this since 2016 and we're super excited about it," he said.

"We had to actually prove that there were no frogs of the growling grass variety on site before we were able to get permission to move them.

"Then we had to apply to a state government panel for approval, and then also a federal government approval process under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act."

Dr Farnsworth said the project could also act as a blueprint to help reverse the extinction of other native wildlife.

"If we can get frogs to breed successfully in captivity and get them established on site then we can use what we've learned here and share that elsewhere," she said.

Locally extinct

The growling grass frog was once widespread and abundant throughout eastern Australia, in particular throughout northern Victoria, but its numbers have declined dramatically.

The frogs became locally extinct as a result of the loss of habitat caused by the permanent flooding of the wetlands for an artificial lake that has since been decommissioned.



The growling grass frog has not been recorded at Winton Wetlands since 1970.

Introduced fish also contributed to the decline in numbers but what has contributed to the most loss was an infectious disease known as chytrid fungus, according to director of Wild Research Matt West.

"Chytrid fungus is responsible for the decline of more than 500 species throughout the world and many species throughout Australia," Dr West said.

"Unfortunately, the growling grass frog is highly susceptible to catching it."

Chytrid fungus is a waterborne fungal pathogen that frogs can pick up through water or direct contact with each other.

"Once it gets into a site, chytrid just continues to spread throughout the populations until the frogs either decline or learn to live with it," Dr West said.

Monitoring disease

While in quarantine, the frogs will be tested and monitored for the fungal disease.

"We'll be looking for how their general health is tracking," Dr Farnsworth said.

"We'll be feeding them daily and also periodically swabbing the frogs for the chytrid fungus to see whether or not they're still carrying anything from the Bendigo area.

"We pretty much can't release them from quarantine until we know that they're free of chytrid."

The frogs will then be moved to a breeding enclosure on site, that has been specially built on expert advice.

November then marks the start of the breeding season.



"These frogs are capable of producing around 4,000 eggs and tadpoles at a time," Dr West said.

Those offspring will then be released throughout parts of the wetlands where it is hoped population numbers will thrive once again.

"They form a very important part of the food chain and the whole ecosystem function," Mr Lloyd said.

"They're very different frogs to other frogs.

"They're predatory, so they'll eat frogs and invertebrates and also they are a large prey item for endangered birds that we hope to attract the site."

SHOWS, CONFERENCES, PLANT SALES AND OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST

Provided by Nicky Zanen, APS Victoria

IMPORTANT ----- PLEASE CHECK APS VICTORIAN WEBSITE FOR CANCELLATIONS

23 & 24 March 2024 - Cranbourne Friends RBGV Autumn Plant Sale. 10 am to 4 pm. Wide range of plants, plant list available one week before sale. Website: rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

6 & 7 April 2024 – APS Wangaratta take part in Off-Grid Living Festival & Campout, Chiltern Racecourse & Recreation Reserve, NE Victoria. Providing information about Australian plants – growing, maintenance, suitability and also selling plants which we have propagated ourselves.

13 April 2024 – APS Geelong Australian Native Plant Sale, 'Wirrawilla', Lovely Banks. 8.30 am to 4.00 pm.

21st April – Launch of Gardens for Wildlife, Wangaratta District. 475 Shanley St, Wangaratta South. 12 noon – 4pm. Organised by Greta Valley Landcare Group. Plant Stall, garden tours & Devonshire teas.

20 April 2024 - APS Yarra Yarra Autumn plant sale. Eltham Community and Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham. 10am-4pm

5 September 2024 – Wimmera Biodiversity Seminar. Further details to follow.

14 & 15 September 2024 APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo. Eltham Community and Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham. 10am - 4pm

21 & 22 September 2024 – APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show, Pomonal Hall.

21 & 22 September 2024 – Angair Wildflower Show & Art Show, Anglesea Memorial Hall, McMillan Street, Anglesea. 10 am to 4 pm. Wildflower display, indigenous plant sales, art show and painting sales.

30 September to 4 October, 2024 – ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference in Melbourne hosted by APS Victoria.

19 & 20 October 2024 - Cranbourne Friends RBGV Spring Plant Sale. 10 am to 4 pm. Wide range of plants, plant list available one week before sale. Website: rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Your 2023/2024 Committee:

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