



**AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY (SGAP)
Warrnambool & District Group Inc. Newsletter**
MAY 2020 No 459

Correa reflexa 'Grannys Grave'

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'Plants of the Great South West',
book on plants of South West Victoria
\$20, available from
Kevin Sparrow at
ksparrow93@gmail.com
Ph: 55626217



New Edition
available soon.



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EDITORIAL

Hello members,

Its coming up to that time of the year when we usually hold our Annual Meeting at the end of May. With us not being able to hold a public meeting at the moment, this creates a difficulty for us. In the meantime, we have applied for and received an extension from Consumer Affairs for when we are required to lodge our annual return. This means we can put it off for a while until we are back holding Members Nights again or we could look at presenting and voting on the formalities by email or we can even set up a Zoom online video session whereby members can log in from home. We have never done this before so it would be a bit of an experiment. This also might be a problem for some members who aren't able to participate. So we do have some options. In the meantime, financial reports are being prepared and we are looking for members to nominate for the committee for the coming year. Its not hard, just need to come to the monthly committee meetings which are held at members homes at 5.00pm the Tuesday following our Members Night. (When they start up again) . Please consider standing, let me know and I am more than happy to nominate you. We do need some new faces again.

Before this lock down all started we had some plans for the year, one idea we had is for our group to have a weekend away visiting Cranbourne gardens and Bob O'Neil's garden nearby. We have had some interest in this from members so keep it in mind for when we get to start up again. We are still hopeful of starting up our Members Nights in June. See what happens.

In the meantime our group is still functioning if only at a minor level. This newsletter keeps everyone in the loop so to speak. Thank you to Mike and Liz Halls and John Sherwood for this weeks contributions.

That's it for now, please make an effort to contribute to your newsletter. We would all love to hear from you, Cheers, Kevin.

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**Orchids of New Zealand
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We wish to acknowledge the Maar people as the traditional owners of the land on which we live and pay our respects to their elders past and present.

ALL Members Activities Suspended Until Further Notice

Group Diary Of Activities

May 22nd: AGM & Gavin Prentice on Lower Glenelg RAMSAR site.

Cancelled

May 26th: Committee Meeting TBC Canceled

June 26th: Jacqui Balazs (WCC) - Gardens For Wildlife

June 30th: Committee Meeting TBC

July 24th: Day trip to Hamilton. Garden Visits to Liz Cummins' and Brian and Betty Lacy's Gardens.

From Laura Prentice (DeWp)

I'm working with ANOS (Australasian Native Orchid Society) to plan some orchid surveys of areas burnt in the recent fires. We will be going out in spring to see if we can find any native orchids, particularly rare ones. We can then map them and keep an eye on these populations.

If you or any of the APS members are interested in helping out with this please get them to get in touch with me and I will add them to the volunteer list.



If you are interested Contact Laura at:

unamanna2017@gmail.com

Photo: *Prasophyllum littorale*

Please submit your articles for the newsletter by the end of the second week of the month

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Public Officer: John Sherwood. **APS Reps:** Bob Artis, **Group Historian:** Joyce Sparrow. **Supper Organiser:** Liz Halls.

Other Committee Members: Michael Mattner, Andrew Gray, Joan Krygger

The APS Warrnambool & District holds meetings on the 4th Friday of each month at the Mozart Hall Warrnambool at 8pm.

APS Warrnambool & District is a District Group of the Australian Plants Society (Vic)

All members are required to also be a member of APS Vic.

A Garden In Transition by Mike and Liz Halls

Our garden is about 45 years old, and we are gradually making a few changes as some plants die and others become too large or leggy. We still have three original trees, including *Angophora costata* (Smooth-barked Apple Gum), *Agonis flexuosa* (Willow Myrtle), and *Eucalyptus lehmannii* (Bushy Yate). However, we have removed many more trees over the past few years, and have planted more shrubs, which we can keep pruned in our large suburban block.

Autumn is the season when there are fewest shrubs flowering. However, since the early rainfall, some shrubs, particularly the banksias and grevilleas have started to flower and others plants are budding-up. The soil is alkaline and sandy and is suitable for growing banksias, grevilleas, and many western Australian plants. The beds in the rear garden are landscaped with logs and rocks and mulched, while most of the front garden are covered in coarse sand, and white gravel.

The *Hakea* “Burrendong Beauty” (Photo: bottom right) is showing a spectacular display of flowers in the front garden, while the *Grevillea* “Robyn Gordon” flowers in each month of the year. Pictured bottom left are Mike and Liz in front of their magnificent *Telopea speciosissima* (NSW Waratah”) which is presently not in flower.



A Garden In Transition by Mike and Liz Halls



Photos
Clockwise
Grevillea
"Billy Bonkers",
Banksia
"Birthday
candles",
Grevillea
"Robyn Gordon",
Correa alba
"Western Pink
Star",
Melaleuca
fulgens,
and in centre:
Leschenaultia
formosa.

Orchids Of New Zealand By John Sherwood

In November last year I visited New Zealand and, as a part of the trip walked the beautiful Queen Charlotte Track on the northeast corner of the South Island. During our 5 day walk I was surprised to come across many terrestrial orchids looking amazingly like our own greenhoods, onion orchids and caladenias.

With my curiosity raised I began searching for information about possible links between the flora of our two island nations. Both were once part of the giant southern continent Gondwana and they still share some plants from that heritage – the Araucarian pines and Nothofagus (beech) trees for example. New Zealand separated from Gondwana between 80 - 65 million years ago, during the time of the dinosaurs and before mammals became dominant. As it rafted northwards New Zealand took with it a unique collection of birds and plants. Today over 80% of New Zealand's 2,360 plant species are endemic but not all are derived from these original inhabitants - amongst them are later arrivals who have subsequently evolved into the present species.

This is because New Zealand's isolation has never been absolute. From time to time new species have drifted or blown to New Zealand from Australia and Pacific islands. In the Auckland museum I found a display on some of these recent immigrants. It indicated there were about 21 days a year when west wind conditions were suitable to blow spores, seeds, insects and even small birds from Australia to New Zealand. In the last 150 years Australian birds such as the silver-eye, welcome swallow and spur winged plover (masked lapwing) have become established. Plant seeds may also drift across the Tasman Sea on favourable currents or they may adhere to feathers or feet of birds which make the crossing. Many plant genera (65%) are represented by 3 or fewer species (Bodley et al. 2016), again reflecting the difficulties associated with colonisation.



Left: Common onion orchid (*Microtis unifolia*)
Above: Greenhood (Tutukiwi; *Pterostylis banksia*)
Below: Pink Fingers (*Caladenia variegata*)
All photos by John Sherwood



Orchids Of New Zealand By John Sherwood

A 2009 training manual of the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network, “Introduction to Plant Life in New Zealand” (www.nzpcn.org.nz) gives a time line for the arrival of various plant groups (Box 1, Module1, chapter 2, page 6). I have copied it below with minor changes. Surprisingly gum trees and wattles arrived in New Zealand 35 – 5 million years ago but are now extinct. Orchids are apparently more recent (and successful) additions– arriving from 5 million years ago until today:

Original castaways (colonised NZ at least 80 million years ago: Jurassic–Cretaceous–dinosaur age):

Ferns (some)

Gymnosperms such as Araucarian pines including Agathis and podocarps,

Libocedrus, Sequoiadendron spp. (extinct now)

Angiosperms such as Southern beech (*Nothofagus brassii* group), tawa, rewarewa, fuchsias

Early colonisers (Paleocene–Eocene): 65–35 million years ago:

Metrosideros;

Nothofagus fusca group;

Dicksonia

Early west wind drifters (Oligocene–Miocene): 35–5 million years ago:

Nikau palm,

Coprosma,

Kowhai Coconut palm—now extinct

Gum trees (*Eucalyptus*)—now extinct

Wattles (*Racosperma*)—now extinct

Later west wind drifters (Pliocene–Pleistocene): 5 million–10,000 years ago:

Native orchids and hebes (koromiko)

Recent west wind drifters (Holocene): 10,000 years ago to present:

Native orchids

Pomaderris apetala (tainui)

Amongst the orchids 10 Australian species have arrived in the last 100 years but have not spread beyond their initial colonisation site (the sun orchid *Thelymitra matthewsii* is an example). This is thought to be because their natural pollinator was not present. So...not only does a plant species have to make the journey but to succeed in its new home it must have a means of propagation. For some this means a pollinator must have made an earlier successful crossing. For some orchids this has been achieved – for example the duckbill orchid (*Cryptostylis subulata*) arrived in 1975 and has now expanded its range. Many of the orchids (about 60%) are self pollinating. This is clearly of particular advantage given New Zealand’s low diversity of pollinating insects (Bodley et al. 2016).

New Zealand has over 150 named species of orchids across 26 genera (there are at least 25 Greenhood species). The New Zealand Native Orchid Group has wonderfully detailed information on each species (<http://www.nativeorchids.co.nz/>). The Orchid Group’s site certainly brings home the amazing affinity of our “ANZAC” orchids – I strongly recommend a visit!



Thelymitra matthewsii - Spiral Sun-orchid.
Photo: K. Sparrow