



AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY (SGAP) Warrnambool & District Group Inc. Newsletter

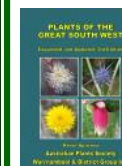
January 2022 No 481

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On Eastern Maar Country

EDITORIAL

Hello members,

I hope everyone has had a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and that the coming year will be a good one for us all.

Due to the current Covid situation in Warrnambool, we have decided not to have dinner together at a hotel as planned but to meet up at Swan Reserve for a 'Walk and Talk' at 5.30pm in the fresh air. Bring a mask if you wish, and a bite to eat and/or drink to help you enjoy the company of your fellow members. There might even be some left over Christmas Cake.

Last month we enjoyed a wonderful time at Sue and Ross' garden at Tower Hill for our Christmas Breakup, good company plus a walk around a magnificent garden. A big thank you to Ross and Sue for hosting our Christmas Breakup.

Thank you to Ross Dawson for the 3rd instalment of his Grampians Report - see page 5.

A big thank you to everyone else who has contributed to this months newsletter,

At this stage, we are still planning to hold our first members night for the year at the Mozart Hall on Friday 25th February next month. Stay tuned, this could change due to Covid but all we can do is plan at the moment.

See you on Friday 28th, Cheers, Kevin

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We acknowledge the Eastern Maar people as the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay our respects to their elders past and present.

January Get-together - Walk and Talk around Swan Reserve on Friday 28th - meet up at 5.30pm

Members Activities

January Get-together: Meet at Swan Reserve at 5.30pm for a guided walk - bring something to eat if you wish.

February 25th: Adam Mattner speaking on Kakadu National Park.



Who said you cannot grow and flower a Sturt Desert Pea in Warrnambool.

APS Vic. Members Activities



“Fabulous Peas”
15th and 16th October 2022

York on Lilydale, Mount Evelyn, Victoria

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

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Other Committee Members: Dorothy Mattner, Michael Mattner, Joan Krygger, Ross Dawson.

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.

Christmas Breakup at Blood/Dawson Garden



20 members attended our Christmas Breakup at Ross Dawson and Sue Blood's garden at Tower Hill on 5th December 2021 and all enjoyed a relaxing day socializing and looking over their amazing garden. Dorothy Mattner as usual baked and decorated a Christmas cake which we all enjoyed eating. *Picture above right is Dorothy Mattner and President Mike Halls doing the customary cutting of the cake.*



Yellow-tail Black Cockatoos Visit Our Garden by Mike Halls

Yellow Tailed Black Cockatoos visit our garden to checkout the progress of the fruiting cones over the Spring period, often flying in pairs of threes. The first we know they are visiting, is their raucous Kee-ah call, or we see detritus falling from Cut Leaf Banksia tree, as they shred to cones with their powerful beaks to gain access to the nutritious banksia seeds. Their powerful beaks can prune branches as large as my finger, and drop the discarded skeleton of the banksia cones on the lawn, with gay abandon. In-

deed, sometimes the only indication that they have visited our garden, are the pruned cones and branches littering the lawn, and some still hanging in the tree. We think of them as raucous vandals, but we love their visits and activities in our garden.



Pomonal Trip Report by Ross Dawson Part 3

Day three Wartook gardens (Royce & Jeanne Raleigh)

With great excitement and expectation we visited the gardens of Royce and Jeanne. It is fair to say we were not disappointed despite the weather conditions not being in our favour.

The use of logs to build and define both the garden beds and inter woven paths left no doubt as to the time and effort to construct this garden. The use of scoria as the mulching medium appeared more natural in this garden's environment and a reduction in follow on mulching that would be required with more conventional mulch. A lesson to those who are confronted with difficult conditions.

The garden shows the maturity in plants and has both of us second guessing what our garden might look like in 40 years time. A mild panic as to our planting density.

The age of the garden enables the layering effect of tall plants through to groundcovers. Not something often practiced in home gardens.

The photos below, due to weather conditions do not fully reflect the presence of this garden or the enjoyment of having the opportunity to walk around it.



Conclusions of our trip

It is not difficult to see where the Grampian APS group draw their inspiration for the flower show but in fairness the cancellation this year has enabled us to enjoy the Grampians /Deep Lead / Lake Fynes area in their natural beauty.

A big thanks to both Linda and David for sharing their knowledge



Pomonal Flower Show, you may have been cancelled, but you will never be forgotten while mother nature looks after the beauty of your region.

C U next year
Ross & Sue (A trip to remember)



Plant Profile By Dave Handscombe



Information on this plant was obtained from various reference books, the internet and from personal experience

Species: *Stylidium graminifolium*

Stylidium - from the Greek stylos meaning a column, referring to the united stamens and style and graminifolium – from the Latin gramineus, grasslike and folium, a leaf.

Common Name: Grass trigger plant.

Dimensions: a tufted grass like plant with leaves varying from 6 to 20 cm long, flower spikes up to 40 cm high with as many as 50 flowers.



Cultivar Name: There are no registered cultivars listed on the ACRA site.

Stylidium graminifolium occurs though out Victoria with the exception of the north west mallee. It can also be found in Tasmania, south eastern South Australia, eastern New South Wales and south eastern Queensland.



Stylidiums are called trigger plants because of the way they are pollinated. The column containing the fused male (stamen) and female (style), parts of the flower is located behind the petals (see photo 4 & 5) and is triggered when an insect's proboscis is inserted into the flower to obtain nectar. When triggered the column rapidly swings around and clubs the insect (see photo 6), depositing some pollen on its head or back and hopefully picking up some pollen from the insect's previous visit to a trigger plant. After about 15 minutes or less the column resets itself. You can observe the trigger action by inserting a fine piece of dry grass into the centre of the flower however only do this once so as not to take too much energy from the plant.

Stylidium graminifolium usually grows in dry sclerophyll forests on nutrient poor well drained soils. Flower colour varies from white to deep pink. Stylidiums have a reputation of being fairly short lived and are best grown in a rockery or pot. Tolerating full sun to partial shade and able to withstand moderate frosts it can be a stunning addition to any garden.

Propagation is easiest from fresh seed although many Stylidiums can be propagated by leaf cuttings. I have successfully got *graminifolium* to produce roots this way, time will tell if they send up a new shoot (see photo 7).



Photo Captions: Photos 1-2: *Stylidium graminifolium* in a garden setting Photos 3: Close up of a flower stalk Photos 4-5: The flower column tucked in behind the petals waiting to be triggered . Photo 6: The column is triggered Photo 7: Leaf cuttings with roots developed

Pigfaces of Warrnambool By Kevin Sparrow

You might remember the movie “Oddball” which was released in recent times. It was largely a fictional story based on the successful program to protect Warrnambool’s Little Penguins from fox predation by the introduction of Maremma dogs onto Middle Island. The dogs have naturally evolved to protect sheep in Europe but do just as good a job at protecting our penguins, their numbers having grown considerably since the introduction of the dogs. They are put on the island during penguin breeding season and prevent the foxes from approaching the island and they have also become a popular tourist drawcard at other times.

Each year in spring, Middle Island becomes a blaze of pink color as a pig-face bursts into flower and becomes attractive to visitors and locals alike. People naturally think that this is a native Pigface, unfortunately it is not, having rapidly spread from an amenity roadside planting to now cover a large part of the island.



Pictured above: Introduced Pigface - *Mesembryanthemum* species onsite at Middle Island.

Pigfaces of Warrnambool By Kevin Sparrow Page 2

Warrnambool has two remnant Pigface plants, the more common *Carpobrotus rossii* (Karkalla) that can be found all along the Victorian coastline and *Disphyma crassifolium* subsp. *clavellatum* (Rounded Noon-flower) which is smaller and less common at least in the south-west. The introduced Pigface, a *Mesembryanthemum* species of South African origin is thought to have been planted by mistake in the past and it has now almost completely smothered out the local *Disphyma*. All that is left is a few small, scattered populations within a roundabout at the Breakwater end of Viaduct Road and before long these too will be gone. I don't know of any other populations of the plant growing within Warrnambool's boundary.

To try and save this plant, I have collected cuttings and are growing on some 40 plants with the idea of planting them back on site and in other areas. I have approached the Warrnambool City Council and they have agreed to remove the nearby introduced *Gazania* daisies and replace them with the *Disphyma* cuttings. I would also like to establish other populations within Warrnambool, somewhere where they would not be under threat and can do well.



Pictured above: *Disphyma crassifolium* subsp. *clavellatum* onsite - Top right *Carpobrotus rossii*



This subspecies was first published under the name *Mesembryanthemum australe* by Georg Forster in 1786, based on New Zealand material and since then there have been a number of revisions with it finally being classified under *Disphyma* in the 1980's and separating it from another but similar South African species, now called *D. crassifolium* subsp *crassifolium*. The plant that was planted by mistake is very different to both these sub species.

The *Disphyma* leaves are edible and they have become a popular native vegetable, having always been a food source for Aboriginal peoples.

By the way, there is also a white flowered form of the *Disphyma* growing over at Port Fairy, it also is under threat. I have also collected cuttings of this one and have it growing at our Swan Reserve Garden.



**Pictured above: *Mesembryanthemum* species - a South African plant.
Lower right *Disphyma crassifolium* subsp *crassifolium* White form.**

Hyacinth Orchids at Mt. Clay by Kevin Sparrow



Hyacinth Orchids found over at Mt. Clay this week are left: *Dipodium pardalinum* and right: *Dipodium roseum*.