



AUSTRALIAN PLANT SOCIETY
Yarra Yarra Group Inc.
(Incorporation No: A0039676Y)

Newsletter Nov - Dec 2023



Dear Members,

Best wishes to you all for the festive season. A time to reflect on the year past, the new year ahead and be grateful for what we have achieved. It has been a successful year for our Yarra Yarra Group, our events have been well attended and feedback positive. The Growers Group powers ahead at Montsalvat. We have established a core group of great hard working plant lovers. However, new ideas and more helpers are always welcome!

This time of the year, one of my favourite plants is the hardy *Grevillea robusta*, the Australian Silky Oak. It is in full bloom, with brilliant fiery golden/red flowers and fern like leaves. It looks like a giant lit-up Christmas tree. The word "robusta" refers to the fact that the timber is strong like an English oak. The timber has a silky texture, and a pattern and light colour resembling English oak. Like all *Grevilleas*, it literally drips nectar and is a magnet for birds and insects.



Grevillea robusta © creative commons

New Members: A very warm welcome to Kate Sterrenberg and Lindy Harris

Editor

Latest News

Help with the newsletter needed in 2024

The editor would like to involve more members with the production of the newsletter in 2024. This would lighten my load but also help ensure the long term future of the newsletter.

The only prerequisite is that you have some basic computer skills. I currently produce the newsletter on Word. If you don't own a computer you could use the group's computer. Support will of course be given.

If you are interested in getting involved please contact Sonia Gatti on 0423414068 or soniagatti59@gmail.com

End of the year celebration at Wycliffe Sunday 3rd December

Report by Peter Smith

After Saturday's rain, Sunday brought sunshine and a beautiful day for our breakup gathering. Arriving at Kangaroo Ground, we noticed a group of kangaroos also enjoying the sun.



Photo: Andrew McCann

Andrew, with other family commitments later in the day, was ensuring that things were "on track". Suzy, Roula and Suzanne were busy preparing food and arranging everything.

Janet and Roy have made Wycliffe available for the last few years now, and each year we appreciate how fortunate we are. Members (including some new) were arriving and before long we had settled in and conversation was flowing.

Cathy had provided a card for us to sign, thanking and wishing Miriam well for her move to Wonthaggi.

Then came the food...and what a treat ! Roula, with Suzie and Suzanne's assistance, provided us with a gastronomic delight.

We then paused a while to thank Jill Lulham for her many years of superhuman efforts in keeping this Yarra Yarra Group alive and well. Then more food, raffle prizes and breaking up and setting off on our tour.

Our recent visits have coincided with some good rains, and the resulting plant growth is a reward for Janet and Roy, and for their many years of dedicated effort. Now approaching their nineties, we only hope that there is someone who can one day follow in their footsteps.

Back to the rotunda and a lovely fruit platter provided by Andrew and co.

Now for some thankyou's (some I missed on Sunday) Thanks to Carmen and the Growers Group, Sonia (and Graeme) for the newsletter, Mike W, Suzanne, Cathy and Sue for being great office bearers, Jenny H for managing our library, Ben on camera, Robert C (sound effects), Colin and Fiona; and Suzie Gordon for managing this particular eventful day. And finally, to everyone who managed to turn up making it all worthwhile!

The amazing food prepared by Roula
Photos by Andrew McCann (AM) and Cathy
Mann (CM)



(CM)



(CM)



(AM)



Roula, Suzanne and Suzie preparing the food (CM)



Lovely table preparation (AM)



Members enjoying lunch. Photo: Jill Lulham

**Next Meeting
Sunday 4 February**

Our next meeting will be a social occasion at Montsalvat. on Sunday 4th of February 2024 at 12:30. BYO lunch. A great opportunity to check out what the Growers Group has been propagating, buy plants and have lunch in the beautiful surrounds of Montsalvat.



Roy showing members around. Photo: Jill Lulham

Flower Table November

**By Sue Gwilym and Deb Metcalfe.
Photos by Ben Eaton (BE), Document
Camera (DC) by Andrew McCann.**

Thank you to everyone who brought along flower specimens for our November meeting and thank you to Miriam Ford for leading the discussion:



Callistemon teretifolius (BE)



Chamelaucium uncinatum (DC)



Prostanthera striatifolium (DC)



Grevillea banksii x *nana* 'Miami Pink' (DC)



Rhododendron lochiae or *variosum* hybrid (BE)



Meleleuca thymifolia (BE)



Verticordia chrysantha (BE)



Ricinocarpus pinifolius (DC)

Other plants featured:

Cassinia aureonitens, *Cassinia longifolia*

Crowea exalata white

Dodonaea viscosa

Eremaea
Eremophila Meringur Isaac
Eremophila nivea x glabra 'Pink Panther'
Exocarpus cupressiformis (Cherry Ballart fruit)
Isopogon anemonifolius 'Sunshine'
Isopogon formosus 'Pink Sparkler'
Kunzea ambigua
Kunzea pomifera
Leptospermum 'Piccolo'
Meleleuca fulgens
Myoporum floribundum
Pileanthus vernicosus
Plectranthus
Prostanther 'Poorinda Ballerina'
Prostanthera arapilensis
Prostanthera sp
Sarchochilus fitgeraldii x
Senna artemisioides
Verticordia formosaXXX

Past Speaker Reports

Report from 2nd of November meeting

Isopogons and Petrophiles

By Cathy Mann

Photos : C. Bate and P. Trickett

Our speakers were Catriona Bate and Phil Trickett, convenors of the Isopogon and Petrophile study group, which is free to join for all members through ANPSA.

These plants are commonly called the Drumsticks (Isopogons) and Conebushes (Petrophiles) due to the elongated floral bracts which become the cone scales in these plants.

Most are endemic to WA, except for a few Isopogon species in NSW, SA and Victoria. They have not been studied as closely as many Australian genera and there is a lack of knowledge about them, which Catriona and Phil are hoping to increase with their studies. They hope to publish a book about them at some stage.

They are generally small to medium shrubs, which respond well to pruning and like good drainage. They are tolerant of dry conditions and will do well in pots. Prune soon after flowering. They are very used to dry Summers, especially the WA species.

They have huge numbers of tiny flowers in the floral bract, with lots of pollen. The pollen presenters on the flowers are feathery and coloured, quite elaborate and attractive to pollinators – mostly bees. Species can be differentiated according to the pollen presenters. Flower colours range from pinks and purples to yellows, creams and whites. All WA species are at the pink end of the colour spectrum.

The main difference between the 2 genera is that the Isopogons only retain their inner cone after seeds (enclosed in dried fruits) and cone scapes drop. The Petrophiles retain the cone scales after the fruit drops.

Some species will resprout after fires, others will germinate from seed, but too frequent fires are a problem for plants in the wild.

Places to see these plants: – Melton Botanic Gardens, Wartook Gardens. Limited supplies are available at nurseries

Propagation: Seeds have low viability and are subject to damping off. Need to be fresh.

Cuttings – semi-hardwood, well-drained potting mix (add 1/3 perlite)

Due to the difficulty of growing WA species in our climate, they are often grafted onto Isopogon “Coaldale Cracker” which is a very tough, drought and frost-resistant rootstock.

It was an eye-opening and informative introduction to these very showy plants and we thank Catriona and Phil for their time and sharing their knowledge with our group.

Isopogon
'Coaldale Cracker'




Isopogon ceratophyllus

- collected in 1804 in Port Phillip VIC
- Described by Brown in 1810
- Named for its antler-like leaves
- Flowers winter through to summer (July-Jan)
- 15-100 cm tall
- lignotuber



Cones

Floral bract:
→ cone scale

Past Garden Visit Reports

The Dandenongs 5th November: The Chelsea Olinda and Karwarra Gardens

Report by Heather Smith

Photos by Heather Smith (HS) and Cathy Mann (CM)

How relaxing to be chauffeured (in good company) across the 'burbs and up into the

hills to our first stop – the Chelsea Garden at Olinda. Located within the Dandenong Ranges Botanic Gardens (formerly the *National Rhododendron Garden*), the **Chelsea Australian Garden at Olinda** is a re-creation of the first ever Australian entry to win at the 2013 Chelsea Flower Show. Designed by Phillip Johnson and Wes Fleming, it was toured by the Queen and Prince Harry and was unanimously voted 'Best in Show'.

It has been built at 20 times the size of the original on an unused grassed area of the former Olinda Golf Course and features rare and endangered plant species, an enormous Waratah sculpture, waterfall and billabong. Over 15,000 plants have been used from over 400 different Australian species – including a collection of Mint bushes (*Prostanthera* species) donated by our own member, Miriam.

Walking down the gradual, winding path to the billabong and waterfall you get an impressive view of the installation. Considering it only opened in June, many of the plants appeared to be well established and most were flowering. I loved the use of rocks, including the monolith covered in ringworm-like fossil shapes and the very rough volcanic rocks placed vertically along a wall. There are Q codes on all the signage that when scanned take you further into the details of the construction of the garden, the plant species and Waratah sculpture.

Then back onto the bus to our next stop – the **Karwarra Australian Native Botanic Gardens** at Kalorama. Established in 1965, this is one of the few public gardens where native plants are used exclusively, giving visitors the opportunity to see how they can be used effectively as part of a landscaped garden. The original landscaping of the garden has an interesting history and includes a rockery developed by Ellis Stones. Karwarra is also responsible for the Plant Trust Boronia and Telopea collections as part of the Garden Plant Conservation Association initiative. It is now owned and operated by the Yarra Ranges Council with support and assistance from the 'Friends of Karwarra' group.

We sat on the grass, ringed in places by Greenhood Orchids, to eat our lunch. We

then wandered the paths among many interesting native and indigenous species. There was a small photographic exhibition by a local woman to enjoy, as well as the glimpsed views of Silvan Dam and distant hills between the towering Eucalypts.

This was my favourite garden – to me it seemed more human-sized and natural. I loved the (apparent) randomness of the plants: the layers of texture and colour of the foliage, flowers and bark, light and shade all worked together. It was subtle and peaceful. Although the blood pressure did rise a bit as I walked around the well-stocked nursery and like others had to bundle a bag of tube stock into the back of the minibus.

A wonderful day, perfect weather, good company – thanks to Cathy and Peter for organising and Peter for driving and bus logistics.

www.parks.vic.gov.au/places-to-see/parks/dandenong-ranges-botanic-garden/attractions/chelsea-australian-garden-at-olinda

www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Experience/Parks-Recreation/Karwarra-Australian-Native-Botanic-Garden

The Chelsea Olinda Garden



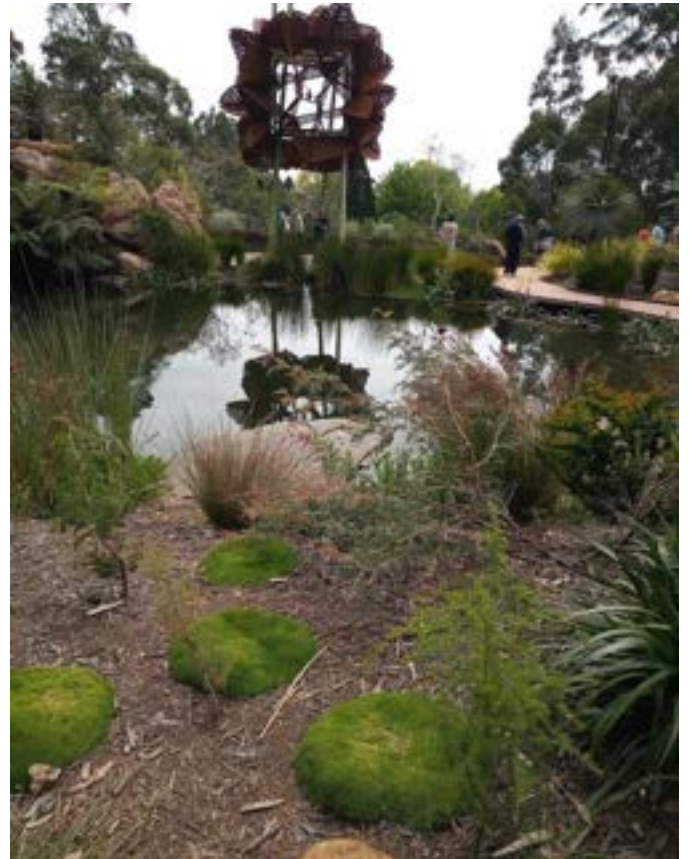
HS



HS



CM



CM

The Karwarra Gardens



HS



HS



HS



The YY group having lunch at Karwarra Gardens
Photo by Ray Barnes

Diary Dates 2024

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



Administrative Matters

The APS Yarra Yarra Committee for 2023-24:

Andrew McCann - President, M: 0419553303

Cathy Mann - Secretary, M: 0409 706 610

Sue Gwilym - Treasurer, M: 0401 250 331

Peter Smith - General Committee, Garden visits, M:0425798275

Sonia Gatti - General Committee, Growers Group, Newsletter, M:0423414068

Suzie Gordon - General Committee, M: 0457 084 467

Suzanne Craine - General Committee, Growers Group M:0407290903

Newsletter - bimonthly

Contributions for the Newsletter to the Editor Sonia Gatti by **Friday 9th February 2024** please. Receipt of emails will be acknowledged.

Email: soniagatti59@gmail.com

Or yarrayarra@apsvic.org.au

OR post to Newsletter Editor, APS Yarra Yarra, PO Box 298, Eltham 3095

Thank you to Graeme Sparkes and Cathy Mann for proof reading.

We wish to acknowledge the major sponsorship of our Expo by Hume Bricks & Pavers Pty Ltd.

(<https://www.humebrickspavers.com.au/>)

Thank You!

Website: www.apsyarrayarra.org.au

Facebook: facebook.com/APS Yarra Yarra

Meeting Particulars: Visitors always welcome.

When: 7.30pm, 1st Thursday each month (except January). Doors open 7.00pm. Come early for plant sales. Supper following the meeting is provided.

Venue: Mummery Room, Edendale Community Environment Farm, 30 Gastons Rd, Eltham VIC 3095

Guest Speaker: Learn more through talks by expert speakers, and discussions following.

Flower Table Specimens: Bring along your flowers, labelled, if possible, for the flower table. Share and swap cutting material for propagating.

Plant Sales: Members may buy plants, unusual varieties are often available, or sell their own.

Library: Members can borrow books from our specialist library.

Chairs: Members, please help set up chairs for the meeting from 7.30pm onwards and put away again after the meeting.

We acknowledge the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners of the country on which we meet, we pay our respects to Elders past, present and future and extend that respect to all First Nations Peoples.