



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

**Newsletter March - April 2024**

**From your Editor ...**

Dear Members,

Probably like you, I have been looking forward to some beautiful Autumn days and some much needed time in my garden. This time of the year is Correa flowering time! Correas are such giving plants, very hardy and will grow in a range of conditions even semi-shade. My Dusky Bells are looking marvellous this year, with nice plump flowers which are attracting Eastern Spinebills to my garden.

Autumn is also the time for our Plant and Book Sale, which was of course held last Saturday. We had more than 600 people through the doors, with over 300 in the first hour! A great team effort. A big thank-you to all our volunteers!

**A warm welcome to new members: Robyn Freeman, Lara Stokes and Daina Rumbergs.**

Your Editorial Team

**Next Meeting**  
**Thursday 2 May 2024**

Our May meeting will feature a presentation by Mike Williams and Ray Barnes on their trip to Western Australia. With so many stunning plants endemic to WA, like this grafted *Darwinia macrostegia* (Mondurup Bell) at Karwarra, this is a talk not to be missed.



**Our wonderful Webmaster still needs your help**

**I would like a few volunteers to help me with YY Facebook/Instagram and especially our website [www.apsyarrayarra.org.au](http://www.apsyarrayarra.org.au) PLEASE!**

This is to ensure we have new content uploaded regularly to keep our followers interested in native plants and what YY do. Basically, we need a group to help with social media publicity/communication. This is so these sites can continue being updated when I am not available to do it, and to ensure their longevity into the future.

**No special expertise** with HTML, coding or programming required for the website. Just being comfortable with computers and interested in growing the public's interest in native plants. I'm happy to do some training sessions or just help when and where needed.

**Contact Jill** through [yarrayarra@apsvic.org.au](mailto:yarrayarra@apsvic.org.au)

**And some help setting up for our monthly meetings**

Help is also needed by Andrew to set up the audio-visual equipment for our monthly meetings.

**No technical knowledge is required**, just some extra hands.

If you can help, contact Andrew on 0419 553 303 or just turn up early and pitch in.

Audio-visual makes our meetings zing, so pitch in!

## Upcoming Speakers

**6 June 2024**

### **Sam Cox, native landscape designer**

Sam provides his personal perspective of the naturalistic landscape style pioneered by Gordon Ford and Ellis Stones. He contends the practice is imbued with timelessness and authenticity that is attuned to the genius loci, or 'spirit of place.'

Topics covered include the philosophy and practice of landscape naturalism, some of Sam's most notable gardens designed and built over his career, the benefits in bringing nature in close to everyday living spaces, and how this style of work regularly bridges trends in landscape design.

**To double our good fortune, Sam has invited us to visit his garden in Wattle Glen on 7 July at 2pm.**



Sam grew up in central Victoria with a deep affiliation for the natural environment. Leaving school, he travelled overseas dabbling in ecotourism, farm work and national park maintenance. Upon his return, he had an opportunity to meet Gordon Ford at his Eltham garden, where they discussed his style of landscaping at length. Gordon offered Sam a few weeks of work experience while awaiting studying at Burnley Horticultural College. Work experience soon became full-time work, which continued until Gordon passed away in 1999.

In developing his practice, Sam has endeavoured to maintain the integrity and approach of his mentor. He takes every opportunity to increase awareness of the naturalistic landscape style which continues to bring a wealth of creative purpose to his life.

Sam was a keynote speaker at the Australian Landscape Conference in 2018 and contributed to the 2023 conference with the opening of the Wildcoast Garden in Portsea. Sam works on numerous projects in collaboration with leading Australian architects, and his work features regularly in both national and international publications. A renewed enthusiasm for native gardens heartens him, and he encourages landscape design students to study the local design tradition Ellis Stones and Gordon Ford pioneered.

**4 July 2024**

### **John Thompson on Correas**

John is a long-time member of the Australian Plant Society and is currently the President of the South East Melbourne group of the APS. In 2020 he received the Imprensa Award from APS Victoria for Outstanding Service to his group.

He has been a regular presenter at the Plant Genus Workshops at Cranbourne since their inception in 2010.

A keen grower of Stylidiums (Triggerplants) and other unusual Australian plants and has provided plants for the gardens at Cranbourne.

When not gardening, he works for a stained glass studio as a production manager, overseeing the drafting of full scale designs, cutting and fabricating windows for both domestic and public buildings.

John's talk will focus on the history, utilisation and horticultural aspects of correas and their relatives.



*The many ways of Correas: C. reflexa Kangaroo Island form at Karwarra (Photo Sally Collyer)*

**1 August 2024**

### **Vikki and Wayne Tonissen Weeping Grevillea Nursery**

Details in our next newsletter.

## Upcoming Garden Visits

### Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne Sunday 5 May 2024

Our **May** garden visit will be to the Royal Botanic Gardens in Cranbourne. You'll remember that this had to be postponed due to heatwave - no such problem now!

**Meet outside the Gift Shop at the main entrance at 10.45am** ready to take the free guided tour at 11am. For those who want more (and who won't?), there is also a range of half-hour and one-hour self-guided walks, with maps available from the Visitor Centre.

The 33 Living Collections in these Gardens are a library of Australian native plants, and the remnant native bushland is an oasis in a desert of development.

Be aware that **major roadworks** and detours near the eastern entrance might cause significant delays in accessing the Gardens.

For more information, check the Gardens' website at [www.rbg.vic.gov.au/cranbourne-gardens](http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/cranbourne-gardens). Information on the roadworks, including a diagram showing the detour route, is available at [www.rbg.vic.gov.au/cranbourne-gardens/getting-here](http://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/cranbourne-gardens/getting-here)



*A superb - and mildly terrifying - Mirbelia dilatata, the Holly Leaved Mirbelia, at Cranbourne. Endemic to south-west WA, it flowers there from September to January, so with luck we might be treated to a great display of its oblong pods ... from a respectfully safe distance, of course. (photo Sally Collyer)*

### Wycliffe Bible Translators Saturday 8 June 2024

Our **June** garden visit will be a working bee at

Wycliffe Bible Translators  
70 Graham Rd  
Kangaroo Ground

The working bee will **start at 10am**, and a delicious barbecue lunch will be provided for those busy bees.

This will be a marvellous opportunity to see the progress made since our Christmas function. We might even get to catch up with the resident kangaroos.



*The beautiful Mountain Bottlebrush (Callistemon montanus) at Maranoa Gardens (Photo Sally Collyer)*

### Sam Cox's Garden Sunday 7 July 2024

Our **July** garden visit will be to Sam Cox's garden in Wattle Glen **starting at 2pm**.

Following from Sam's talk on 6 June (see page 2 of this newsletter), members will be able to immerse themselves in his design principles and see his methods come to life. Bring your notes and your questions.

Details of the visit will be in the next newsletter. Truly Christmas in July!

## Latest News

### Yarra Yarra Plant Sale 20 April 2024

By Peter Smith, photos by Sally Collyer

#### It's been yet another successful Autumn Plant Sale

Arriving at the lockup on Friday afternoon, the sun had seen an end to the showers and rain we had all the previous week. Loaded up and over to the centre where helpers and nurseries were already at work. An amazing transformation was well underway. Tables were soon stacked high with plants.



*Standing room only at the plant sale.*

The front desk was a picture, the membership table (as always) well prepared, the books laid out. The all new, all encompassing big screen highlighting those beautiful plants up on the stage. The hours of thought, discussion, co-ordination, and preparation put in by Jill and the Events sub-committee were now coming off. Many hands had set the scene.



Saturday morning, the doors open, old and new heads file through, and before long plants and books were on their way. The day was a bit shorter this year in order to make our job a bit easier, but the event as a whole met with positive comments all round.

My impression is that the native gardening enthusiasm is on the rise. Having recently been to MIFGS, from last year's dearth of Oz plants, this year I noticed many display gardens featuring native plants. The figures shall come in, but overall those on the day(s) should be pleased with their efforts.

Thanks to all those involved.



*Australian native plants shining in Gold Medal winning gardens at MIFGS 2024*

*Left: 'Saltbush' by Phillip Withers and Fiona Brockhoff*

*Above: 'Look Within' by Madeleine Holyman & Andrew Sargood*

*Top: 'Through the Looking Glass' by Stem Landscape Architecture & Design and ID Landscaping*

Latest News

Propagation demonstration  
Nillumbik Plants for Wildlife  
24 March 2024

Report and photos by Margaret Dent



*Margaret and Deborah brought plentiful and wide-ranging supplies of propagation material for those ready to hone their skills*

Growers' Group plants are sold at our monthly meetings, our Autumn one-day sale in April, and our two-day Expo held in September.

The weather was perfect, the attendees were very keen to learn, and a lot of information was shared.



*Members of 'Nillumbik Plants for Wildlife' keen to build their propagation skills*

On Sunday 24 March, Deborah Metcalfe and I were invited to give a demonstration on propagation to a group from *Nillumbik Plants for Wildlife* at Peppers Paddock.

They invited us along to show them how we propagate native plants at the polytunnel set-up that the Yarra Yarra Region's Growers' Group has at Montsalvat.



*Choosing the right pot is important*

The whole event was a wonderful reminder of the camaraderie amongst the lovers of Australian plants.



*Margaret Dent (left) and Deborah Metcalfe (seated) give their hands-on demonstration*



## Past Speaker Reports

### Alpine Plants Chris Clarke 7 March 2024

By **Maeve Kennedy**, photos by **Chris Clarke**

Chris is a member of APS Keilor Plains and has a particular interest in alpine plants. Chris' talk focused on the Victorian high country and our local alpine plants. November to February is the best time for flowers in the high country.



*Mountain celery (Aciphylla glacialis)*

Chris provided an overview of the geology in the Victorian high country, saying that most of our alps geology is sedimentary, mainly flat and round mountains because we don't have steep glacial valleys. Our mountains are still growing... very slowly! Approximately 70 metres every million years. In Victoria, Mount Bogong is the tallest mountain, at 1,986 metres (6,516 ft) above sea level.



*Mountain Plum-pine (Podocarpus lawrencei)*

Alpine plants adapt in many ways, including:

- Having a high concentration of oils
- Often hugging other plants and rocks
- Planning their timing
  - Often growing and flowering very quickly in spring
  - Plants in bogs carefully time their flowering and growth
- Sometimes storing carbohydrates in their roots
- Seed dormancy
- Having flexible stems (to survive under snow).



*Australian Caraway (Oreomyrrhis eriopoda)*

A lot of our mountains have their own endemic species, for example, the Baw-Baw Berry (*Wittsteinia vacciniacea*).

There are high numbers and diversity of insects and butterflies, but fewer birds over summer – though Chris said that gang-gang cockatoos and flame robins can be seen regularly. Many high country plants are pollinated by flies.



*Royal Bluebell (Wahlenbergia gloriosa)*

Plant families in the high country include:

- A huge amount of daisies! Chris noted that there are many species that are closely related and can be difficult to tell apart. He suggested looking for how far the leaves go up the stems, and looking underneath the leaves to ID them.
- *Craspedia* – there are 16-17 types in Victoria, with big daisy heads usually covered in moths and insects. Chris suggested looking for the colour of the heads to identify the variety.
- There are 33 species of buttercups in Victoria, though they have suffered from cattle grazing in the high country.



*Silver Ewartia (Ewartia nubigena)*

- Orchids, including:
  - Magenta bunny orchid (*Eriochilus magenteus*)
  - Sun orchid (*Thelymitra cyanea*) which is a luminous blue
- Mountain milkwort (*Comesperma retusum*)
- Bogong eyebright (*Euphrasia eichleri*), which is considered a vulnerable species
- Mountain violet (*Viola betonicifolia*)
- Many ferns (some are ok in gardens) and types of fungi.

Chris recommended **Luke Steenhuis' book *Wildflowers of the High Country: A Casual Observer's Guide*** as the best book for plant identification, and also suggested [iNaturalist](#).



*Alpine Everlasting (Ozothamnus alpinis)*

- The mountain plum pine (*Podocarpus lawrencei*) which can live over 600 years. It grows up to around 5m high, though it is smaller in higher altitudes.
- Mountain celery (*Aciphylla glacialis*), which grows in the rocky higher peaks
- Australian caraway (*Oreomyrrhis eriopoda*)
- Royal bluebell (*Wahlenbergia gloriosa* from the Campanulaceae family), which can be grown happily in a garden
- Alpine Bottlebrush (*Callistemon pityoides*) which has soft lemony green flowers



*Bogong Daisy Bush (Olearia frostii)*

Chris has been organising alpine trips for their group every two years, with other Victorian APS groups starting to participate. This involves a group of members travelling to the Victorian high country in spring/summer and staying in ski lodges. There are lots of opportunities for walks and hikes, including accessible options. Chris offered to help YarraYarra organise an alpine trip if there is interest.



*Alpine Bottlebrush (Callistemon pityoides)*

## Past Speaker Reports

### Birdwatching vs Botany Will Mitchell 4 April 2024

By **Maeve Kennedy**

At our April meeting we had a presentation from Will Mitchell, who is currently an ecologist at Birdlife Australia. Will spoke about his journey to birdwatching and focused his talk on the Mallee emu-wren in north-western Victoria.



*The exquisite Mallee emu-wren (Photo Ron Knight, Creative Commons)*

The Mallee emu-wren (*Stipiturus mallee*) is native to northwestern Victoria (Murray–Sunset, Hattah-Kulkyne and Wyperfeld National Parks) and eastern South Australia, though its population has been greatly affected by recent bushfires in the area and it is considered an endangered species. If the birds are burnt out of one area, even when the habitat recovers it's very difficult for them to return.

There are estimated to be between 6,000 and 7,000 emu-wrens at the moment. There is work underway to reintroduce the species into certain areas, but it is proving challenging. More information about this work is available on Birdlife Australia's website: <https://birdlife.org.au/bird-profiles/mallee-emu-wren/>.

It is one of Australia's smallest birds, up to only 15cm long including its tail – and weighing about the same as a teaspoon of sugar (about 4-5 grams)! It is so-named because its long tail looks like an emu feather.

Will talked about the close relationship the Mallee emu-wren has with spinifex *Triodia*, which needs to be at the right age, then they live in the 'spinifex fortresses'. Will commented that the emu-wren is not great at flying and tends to scurry – popping up and down out of the spinifex like it is swimming!

Historically it was believed that the Mallee emu-wren was a mid-successional species in terms of fire recovery - taking about 15 years until the spinifex is big enough for them. The spinifex then lasts around 30-40 years and dies off. However, a recent research paper found that elevation has a significant effect on this - spinifex lasts longer in lower elevations, and as far as researchers know, both spinifex and the emu-wren can survive happily indefinitely in these areas.

Will discussed the plant life in northwestern Victoria, which in late winter to early spring is blossoming and very diverse. He said at the right time of year it's possible to walk for kilometres among the wildflowers. Plant species he showed photos of included:

- Different varieties of bluebells, including *Wahlenbergia gracilentia* and *Wahlenbergia stricta*.
- Parrot-peas including the gorgeous showy parrot-pea (*Dillwynia sericea*)
- Lots of orchids in Big Desert including the Wax-lip orchid (*Glossodia major*)
- Flame heath (*Astroloma conostephioides*)
- Common fringe myrtle (*Calytrix tetragona*).



*Yarra Yarra's floral emblem, the Wax-lip Orchid (Glossodia major) (Photo Jim from Adelaide, Creative Commons)*



## Flower Table - March

By Deborah Metcalfe, photos by Ben Eaton

Thank you to everyone who brought along flower specimens for our meeting.



*Verticordia luteola*



*Banksia marginata*



*Correa alba*



*Eucalyptus erythrocorys*



*Banksia media*



*Eremophila strongylophylla*



*Asterolasia hexapetala*

## Flower Table - April

By Deborah Metcalfe, photos by Ben Eaton

Thank you to everyone who brought along flower specimens for our meeting.



*Regelia sp*



*Banksia prionotes*



*Eremophila platycalix*



*Grevillea Lemon Sunrise*



*Eremophila debilis*



*Stenocarpus sinuatus*



*Pelargonium australe*

## Diary Dates 2024

**IMPORTANT:** Please check the APS Victoria website for cancellations at <https://apsvic.org.au>

11 May 2024 - **APS Morning host the next APS Vic Committee of Management Meeting** at Fenton Square, and a visit to the Seaford Banksia Arboretum in the afternoon.

11 May 2024 – **APS Melton Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale**, at St Andrews Uniting Church, Bacchus Marsh, 9am to 1pm. For more details call David Pye, Ph 0417 289 369.

30 June 2024 - **RBGC winter afternoon talk by Dr Garry Price on Alf Salkin:** Botanist, Conservationist, Environmental Educator. The Spitfire bomber pilot who brought Banksias to Cranbourne. At 2pm in the Auditorium at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. Cost \$20 RBGC members, \$25 non members. Details from <https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/>

27 & 28 July 2024 – **APS Bendigo** host APS Vic Committee of Management Meeting plus activities.

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

7 September 2024 – **APS Cardinia Regional Annual Plant Sale**, Akoonah Park, Berwick, 8am to 4pm.

7 September 2024 – **APS Mitchell Expo and Plant Sale**, Wallan Multipurpose Centre, Bentinck St, Wallan.

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

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

28 & 29 September 2022 – **APS Bendigo Flower Show**, Victory Christian College, Kairn Rd, Strathdale, Bendigo, 9.30am to 4pm. \$5 entry, children free. Specialist native plant nurseries, books, garden accessories and more.

5 October 2024 – **Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase**. Masonic Lodge Hall, 426 High St, Echuca .

12 & 13 October 2024 - **Cranbourne Friends RBGV Spring Plant Sale** 10am to 4pm. Wide range of plants, plant list available one week before sale from [rbgfriendedcranbourne.org.au](http://rbgfriendedcranbourne.org.au)

November 2024 – **APS Wangaratta** host APS Victoria Committee of Management meeting and AGM. Details to follow.

### 2025

**15th FJC Rogers Seminar 2025** on *Epacridaceae* hosted by APS Mornington Peninsula.

### 2026

**ANPSA 2026 Biennial Conference**, planned to be held in Alice Springs.

**APS Yarra Yarra Australian Plants Expo - 14-15 September 2024 10am-3pm**

Eltham Community & Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd, Eltham



Visit <https://www.anpsa2024conference.com>

**The 2024 AJ Swaby Address**

will be given by **Phillip Johnson** speaking on the **Chelsea Flower Garden and Garden Design**.

The Address will be a public event at The Round, Nunawading, as part of the ANPSA 2024 Biennial Conference.

## Administrative Matters

## Your Committee

### The APS Yarra Yarra Committee for 2023-24:

Andrew McCann, *President* M: 0419 553 303

Cathy Mann, *Secretary* M: 0409 706 610

Sue Gwilym, *Treasurer* M: 0401 250 331

Peter Smith, *General Committee, Garden visits  
Co-ordinator* M: 0425 798 275

Sonia Gatti, *General Committee, Growers Group,  
Newsletter* M: 0423 414 068

Suzie Gordon, *General Committee* M: 0457 084 467

Suzanne Craine, *General Committee, Speaker  
Co-ordinator* M: 0407 290 903

## Newsletter contributions

### Newsletter - bimonthly

Contributions for the Newsletter to the Editor Sonia Gatti by **Friday 14 June 2024** please.

Receipt of emails will be acknowledged.

Email: [soniagatti59@gmail.com](mailto:soniagatti59@gmail.com)

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## Our floral emblem

The **Wax-lip Orchid** *Glossodia major*, is indigenous to Nillumbik. Thanks to Sue Gwilym for our banner photo.

## Monthly meetings

**Meeting Particulars:** Visitors are 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 from 7pm onwards and put them away again after the meeting.



*The artless elegance of Clematis decipiens at the Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (Photo Sally Collyer)*

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.