

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

(Wangaratta Inc.)

NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2019

Visit the APS Vic website at <https://apsvic.org.au/>

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Please arrive at 7.30 for meetings.

Meeting:- Thursday 28th November Guest Speakers: Robyn & Les MacLean
Topic – Aussie travels in 2018

Saturday 30th November Propagating Day – Park Lane Nursery 8.30am -bring small shrub & ground cover cuttings for propagating. Please bring morning tea to share.

Sunday 8th December CHRISTMAS PARTY
O'Sullivan's Great Alpine Road, Tarawingie from 12.30.
Details at November meeting & email to members

2020 – First Meeting Thursday 27th February

1st March – Outing – BBQ At Beechworth with Arthur & Joan Meyers at 5.00pm

Your committee are working hard to plan an exciting year of speakers and outings.

Our very own Alan Gibb has been honoured with having an Acacia named after him. Acacia boormanii ssp. gibba. Congratulations Alan on years of tireless work to identify this. See September 2019 Growing Australian page 28 for more details.



Thursday 22nd August Annual General Meeting

The AGM went like clockwork! All Positions were pre nominated and accepted, so the usual AGM horrors were not present in having to worry about being nominated for a job you didn't want to do.

John read his Presidents report and we are ready to enjoy another year of speakers, plants, flowers, cups of tea and cakes, outings and friendship

After which there was a silent auction with 30+ beautiful plants from Park Lane Nursery for us to bid on and win. It didn't matter which one you ended up with, as they were all beautiful & suitable for our local gardens. I am sure everyone was pleased with a new surprise plant to add to their gardens. Thank you Helen and Helen for purchasing the plants and arranging the auction.

Miriam Ford - Guest Speaker "Introduction to the LAMIACEAE family

The Mint Bushes and Others. Subject for the F.J.C.Rogers Seminar 2020." from Jan Hall



Prostranthera liseanthus on aqueduct walk (Jan Hall)

2009 Riceonocarpus & Prostranthera

Miriam gave a concise and intriguing talk about these plants which she loves, and she is eager to learn more and share information to encourage us to attend the seminar. I need no encouragement to go as the FJC Rogers Seminars, have all been so informative, stimulating and fun in past years. The host group, APS YARRA-YARRA, group members, are growing heaps of uncommon and popular members of the family for us to purchase.

Lamiaceae. This group of plants includes many culinary herbs which have been introduced since settlement including such well known kitchen herbs as Rosemary, Mints, Thyme, Oregano, and Lavender. Of the Australians, there are 38 genera, with 250 species. There is even a Salvia in NSW.

Best known and grown are the Prostanthera, Westringea spp, Hemiandra, Mentha and Plectranthus spp. Others will be presented at the seminar.

Miriam's overview sparked my interest as I have almost given up trying interesting species from moist woodland which are so beautiful in flower, and I need to find the more drought tolerant plants for Yarrawonga. I do anticipate massed colour in October from my latest planting of the reliable P.ovalifolia dwarf, P. Rotundifolia. And P.melissifolia, planted in sheltered spots. Westringeas are so adaptable, with many uses in low maintenance sites, and seem to always have some flowers for the native bees.

Miriam produced the old book, 'Cradle of Incense'. By George Althofer, which is a lovely read, [reference book], about mint bush discoveries, with heaps of information about their original growing conditions. It has many descriptions of how marvellous they look when all in flower in the wild. The book centres on a remarkable area in NSW, where the genus *Prostanthera* is represented by at least 37 spp. All within a radius of 150 klms. around Wellington where he and his brother Peter, created Burrendong Arboretum beside the Burrendong Dam.

I have a plant of *P. Calycina* and wondered where to plant it, and on Miriam's advice got out the old book to read about dry country Mint Bushes. Now I am looking for a spot at the base of a Mallee Eucalypt for it. Perhaps at the seminar we will see *P.grylloana* with claret red flowers from WA or even on my ANPSA Pre conference tour this year. Most likely we will be offered plants of *P.aspalathoides* with red or yellow flowers, from Victoria's' dry country .

On the other hand, we see, and smell the minty aroma of Alpine plants on trips to the high country, Mirium suggested for gardens *P. Cuneata*, which is a neat small shrub you may have tried. Also we see the Victorian Christmas Bush, *P. Lasianthos*, and on Mt Buffalo, there is *P. Rotundifolia* on the roadside, and the small Buffalo Mint Bush which has strange blue- green- grey coloured flowers, in the rocky woodland. Killawarra forest has a mass of *P. Denticulata*.

We will hear about research projects on the chemical and medicinal properties of these plants, and of course how to grow them, and use in landscaping. I always love the opportunity to see members gardens, while comparing notes with other members.

Jan Hall



PROSTANTHERA MONTICOLA AT Mt Buffallo



Prostanthera cuneata - Alpine Mint Bush

APS Outing to Mullinmar Billabong: - Sunday 25th August.

A walk with Ian Davidson in Mullinmar Billabong (Galen Billabong).

Our Sunday outing to Wareena moved to Mullinmar Billabong because the River water levels were too high for us to venture into the bush there, and Wareena Island was also inaccessible.

However, Ian Davidson had a plan and we were not disappointed upon seeing the work that is being carried out on land owned by Galen College adjoining the Ovens River.

Much weed clearing and planting of indigenous vegetation has been carried out by Wangaratta Sustainability Group and Galen College and .Burrinya school students over the past couple of years

This group have been working actively to remove all of the carp from the Billabong and reintroduce endangered fish into this waterway.

We had an enjoyable walk identifying the plants around the billabong. Bernie Datsan recorded (15) species of birds on our walk.

The group then moved to Apex Park for lunch and to join in with the PBangerang people to acknowledge their ownership of this land.

Sadly I missed the September meeting with the Spring Spectacular display table. I am sure that it was a feast for the eyes as always. I am always surprised to see what people are growing and what is in flower in other people's gardens which are not flowering in my own – or I have not noticed the flowers.

Outing to Everton Natural Features Reserve, Sunday 29th September 2019. by Natalie O'Connell

A small group of friendly APS members gathered on a sunny Sunday morning for walk and talk around the Everton Natural Features Reserve. This bushland reserve is located 3km north of Everton and is bounded by the Wangaratta to Bright rail trail on one side, which forks towards Beechworth at one corner of the reserve.

Michael O'Sullivan led the walk and generously shared his knowledge of visiting the reserve over the last 35 years. He has found over 30 species of orchids, 9 species of wattle and only 4 species of eucalypt. These are Eucalyptus blakelyi (Blakely's Red Gum), E. macrorhyncha (Red Stringybark), E. albens (White Box) and E. polyanthemos (Red Box), as well as hybrids. Interestingly there are no she-oaks at the site. Being a small reserve, there are issues with adjacent private landholdings, some rubbish dumping and incursion of weeds

Members at the old railway crane pivot point at the fork of the Wangaratta to Bright rail trail.



There is some unique flora in the reserve including *Leptospermum multicaule* (Silver Tea Tree) which is listed as vulnerable in Victoria, and *Acacia mitchelii* (Mitchell's Wattle). Some of the orchids, such as the duck orchids, grow only on the western slope of the reserve.

Despite the dry season, Michael explained that we have had regular small rainfall events up until mid September which has resulted in a good floral display. During the walk we encountered many shrubs, grasses, orchids and lilies in flower. The orchids included Pink Fingers (*Caladenia carneae*), Blunt Greenhood (*Pterostylis curta*), Nodding Greenhood (*Pterostylis nutans*) and Maroonhood (*Pterostylis pedunculata*) – this species spotted by John van Riet. The greenhoods were most prevalent under the semi-shade of Cherry Ballart Trees.



A gnarly old Red Box tree.



Wahlenbergia & Caladenia



Twining Fringe Lily

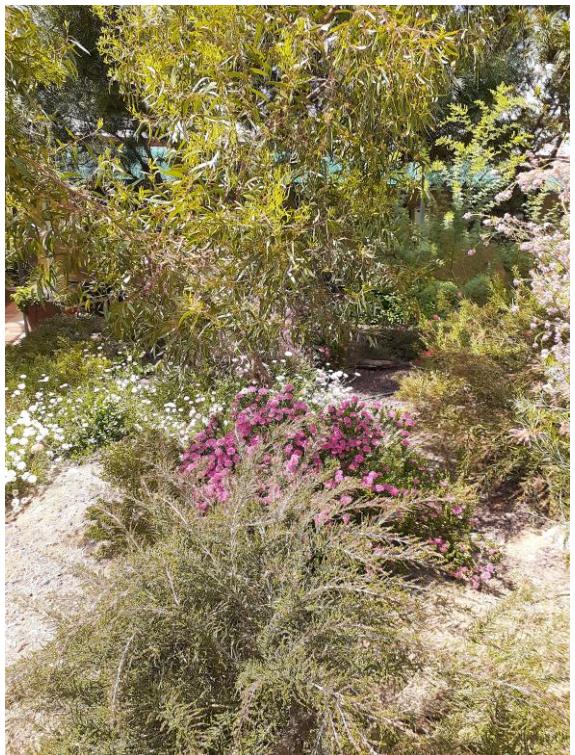
Unfortunately, neither Natalie or myself were able to stay for lunch and to see the second half of the reserve. We hope that members enjoyed their day out and thank Michael for his guided tour and sharing his knowledge of another hidden gem with us.

Meeting: Thursday 24th October

Guest Speaker: Bill Aitchison Topic : Acacias

Bill gave a very informative talk on Acacias. Adding to our knowledge of this huge plant family, Bill showed a slideshow of the different tribes of Acacias explaining the differences in phyllodes / leaves and flower forms

Outing:- Sunday 27th October Barbara Buchanan's garden –, Benalla



Nature Day at Apex Park – Saturday 9th November .by Helen van Riet.

Although the weather looked a bit ‘iffy’, the rain clouds stayed on the mountains and the weather was pleasantly warmish.

The day was organised by the Wangaratta Urban Landcare Group. It included about a dozen stalls featuring various aspects of living closely with nature and the environment. Uncle Freddie Dowling, Mayor Dean Rees and Ian Davidson did the opening honours, followed by the Bangerang dancers and live music.

The main focus was – ‘to learn about environmental activities happening in and around Wangaratta and how everyone could get involved’. Alongside stalls such as ours were interactive displays, children’s activities and a free bbq lunch.

APS Wangaratta had a plant & information stall. We had a pleasing collection of plants for sale and buckets of lovely flowers which created a lot of interest. When bunched up, these were swiftly sold to happy customers during the morning.

This year the Wangaratta Farmers’ Market had shifted location from Apex Park to the grounds of the Wangaratta Cathedral, so we did not have an instantly captive crowd.

Although sales were slow, there was great PR and interchange of ideas and information. We also made \$153 from sales of plants and bunches of flowers.

I've taken home the unsold plants and will babysit them and bring some to the next APS meeting for sale. The 'young & tender' ones will grow on and be ready for next year --- either for sale to APS members, or for our planned market at the Eldorado Off-Grid Festival on 18th April 2020.

At the stall we sold some plants in 6-inch pots which were originally in tubes and potted on from our plant stall last Autumn.

The more mature plants left over from the Nature Day may also need to be potted on.

Six-inch pots with well-developed specimens which are reasonably priced sell well. An issue for growers is that they take up more space and resources than forestry tubestock.

Chocolate Lilies by Helen Wrigley

I picked up 2 free chocolate lilies at the urban Landcare outing to Wangaratta Common and put them in the pot with my other 2. One is flowering beautifully and you can smell it metres away. The other one was attacked by snails. I was amazed by the tubers on the tiny plant in the forestry tube. What a reserve in dry times! Well worth growing. Watch out for snails



Meetings

Meetings are held at Park Lane Nursery, Park Lane, Wangaratta usually on the 4th Thursday of the month from February to November.

Please arrive at 7.30pm for a 7.45pm start.

It is a good idea to bring a torch with you. **Visitors are always welcome.**

Members are encouraged to bring along exhibits for the specimen table which is a regular feature of each meeting.

Pre-meeting dinner get-together Those that are able share dinner together at Café Martini, 87 Murphy Street, Wangaratta, 6.00 – 7.15pm . All members and friends are most welcome. It's a chance to relax with a nice meal and a glass of wine

Australian Plants Society Committee 2019-2020

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