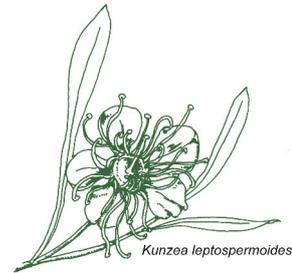




# KUNZEA

Australian Plants Society Maroondah  
*Preservation by Cultivation*



## February 2019

### Friday Meeting

15<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00 pm

### Member Night

There will be no organised speaker for this meeting. Members are asked to bring along up to 10 images OR 5 minutes of video OR an item/flower/plant of interest to talk about (around 5 mins).

We are looking forward to a great variety. It will be good to see or hear what members have been up to and would like to share with all present. Ideas may include trips, paintings, books, favourite plant/flower, any natural history item.

Please give Alison a call or email her to let us know what might be coming on the night. A media stick (USB) would be the best to download before the meeting.

For this night to succeed, we need members to take up this offer to share. Contact Alison on 0438 694 600 or [tenball.rogers@gmail.com](mailto:tenball.rogers@gmail.com).

### Bring a Plate of Supper

Please bring along something to share for supper. The format of this meeting will allow us to be more sociable than some months.

### BOOKS FOR SALE

Bill and Sue will bring along a selection of the APS Victoria books for sale at our February meeting. If there is a particular book you would like them to bring along, either to buy or just to look at, please contact them before the meeting on 9872 3583 or [apsvicbooks@gmail.com](mailto:apsvicbooks@gmail.com).

**Friday meetings are held at the  
Australian Unity Hall  
8 Main St, Blackburn**

*near the Blackburn train station*

### Garden Visit

Doongalla Forest, Mt Dandenong

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> February

**Note the later start: 3pm**

**Bruce Schroder**

February is traditionally our beginning of the year get-together where, rather than visit a parched, tired garden with little in flower (well that's what mine currently looks like), we gather as a group and welcome the new year with a Sunday afternoon "picnic" and perhaps a short walk. Last year it was at Yarran Derran. This year we will be gathering at the former Doongalla Estate which is now part of the Dandenong Ranges National Park.

Meet at the upper BBQ and picnic area (this is the site of the original homestead) at the end of Simpsons Road, The Basin (Melways map 66 D5). Simpsons Road becomes the park access road – just keep driving until you can't go any further – it ends at the car park that services the nearby picnic area. Ignore the lower carpark and picnic area which you will come too first!

The site is deep within the Park and it should be nice and cool in the shade of the forest. We can go for a short loop bush walk along essentially flat formed tracks if interested. Bring your own food, drinks, nibbles and fold up chairs. The gates will be locked at 6pm so we will need to leave before then.

**Note that this visit will NOT be on if it is a  
TOTAL FIRE BAN day.**

### Introduction to Gardening with Australian Plants

Joe Wilson will be running another *Introduction to Gardening with Australian Plants* Course in April and early May this year. The course will be run on Tuesday nights on 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th April, finishing on 7th May.

These courses are always very popular and informative. They will again be held at the Horticultural Centre at 82 Jolimont Road, Nunawading. The cost per person is the same as last year at \$75.

If you, or a friend want to find out more, please contact Joe on 9812 0209.

# Specimen Table

Written up by Mirini Lang

Thanks to our presenters Bruce Schroder and Jo Cameron. We were all delighted by how much is in flower at this time of year after the prolonged dry.

***Eremophila gibbifolia*** – a rare plant from western Victoria. Grows to about 0.5 m tall and 0.2 m wide with tiny purple flowers. Likes a dry position.

***Corymbia ficifolia*** – this grafted tree is 2 m tall with stunning red flowers. It attracts lorikeets and honeyeater birds.

***Billardiera variifolia*** – a creeper from SW WA with purple flowers.



*Billardiera variifolia*

***Billardiera floribunda*** – a creeper also from SW WA. Has white flowers. Seed dormancy on both of these plants is hard to break.

***Callistemon rugulosus*** – grown from seed from the Little Desert in Western Victoria. Has prickly leaves and small but numerous flowers. Grows to 3 m tall.

***Backhousia citriodora*** – a tree to 8 m tall with low dense branching habit. Leaves can be used in cooking or tea for a lemon flavour.

***Hypocalymma robustum*** – a 1 m tall shrub with hot pink flowers.



*Hypocalymma robustum*

***Alyogyne huegelii*** – shrub to 2.5 m tall with purple flowers most of the year. Benefits from regular pruning.

***Verticordia monadelpha*** – grows to about 1.5 m tall with hot pink flowers.



*Verticordia monadelpha*

***Rhododendron lochiaie*** – has red flowers and needs moisture in summer. This specimen seemed to be the true species, but Bruce warned that sometimes the plants sold by Kuranga Native Nursery are inadvertent hybrids (with an exotic species). He recommends that you see the plant in flower before buying.

***Blandfordia grandiflora*** – also known as Christmas Bells. Has red tubular flowers with yellow tips. The Friends of Cranbourne, Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, wants to propagate this plant.

***Grevillea chrysophaea*** – from the Brisbane Ranges west of Melbourne. Likes a sunny spot. Has been flowering since late August. Has greyish foliage and small yellow flowers. This species also grows naturally in Gippsland.

***Lythrum salicaria*** - a herbaceous perennial with purple flowers which grows in swampy situations or on the water's edge. Has deciduous leaves which turn red in autumn. Needs to be cut back after leaves have dropped.



*Lythrum salicaria*

***Persoonia pinifolia*** – a large shrub 2-4 m tall with attractive yellow flowers from December to June. Jo reported that ‘seedlings’ often appear in the ground around the shrub (but perhaps these are suckers?). The Australian National Botanic Gardens website (<https://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp/interns-2009/persoonia-pinifolia.html>) reports that this plant is hard to strike from cuttings, as well as to break seed dormancy.

***Veronica perfoliata*** – a tough small shrub with blue grey rounded leaves and mauve flowers. Prefers part sun and tolerates a dry position. Both leaves and flowers are attractive. Can be weedy. There are upright and floppy forms.



*Veronica perfoliata*

***Veronica arenaria*** – this small shrub has attractive deep blue flowers from September to May. Flowers should be removed when finished to keep shrub dense, otherwise it tends to fall over.

***Pelargonium australe* ‘Hanging Constable’** – this small herbaceous plant has purple underside of its leaves with small pink flowers.



*Pelargonium australe* ‘Hanging Constable’

***Chrysocephalum apiculatum*** – this specimen is from Yorke Peninsula in South Australia. It has flat dense silver foliage and bright yellow flowers.

***Grevillea ‘Superb’*** – a tough shrub to 2 m tall with orange/pink flowers most of the year. Prunes well.

***Grevillea georgeana*** – has attractive red and white flowers on a shrub up to 2.5 m tall. From WA.

***Melaleuca lateritia*** – has small red flowers. Shrub can be pruned heavily up to 2/3 of its branch.

***Grevillea leptobotrys* ‘Lilac Tangles’** – a grafted species from WA. Has attractive small mauve/pink toothbrush like flowers. Flowers for a long time.

### Tip of the Month

#### *Eucalyptus lunata*

We often see branches of *Eucalyptus lunata* (also known as *Eucalyptus* ‘Moon Lagoon’) on the Specimen Table. The blue-grey juvenile foliage is much prized in the garden, in vases and by florists. Hence, it is often suggested that all of the branches should be pruned back hard to maintain the juvenile growth.

Another suggestion heard recently is to cut back the branches in the front and perhaps sides, and allow the back to grow mature foliage. The effect is then of two different trees – one growing in front of the other.

### MELBOURNE INTERNATIONAL FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW

APS Victoria will be having a display again at MIFGS in 2019. This year we are to have 2 one-hour sessions on the main stage, giving our Society unprecedented exposure to the general public.

**Thursday 28th March 2019 1:45 pm – 2:45 pm**

**Saturday 30th March 2019 3:30pm – 4:30 pm**

It would be really great if there could be a big audience to ask lots of questions!

Also, if you are able to help on the display, please contact Dallas and Bernard on [bernard.boulton@bigpond.com](mailto:bernard.boulton@bigpond.com), or phone 9729 1538 or 0418 354 838 (Bernard)

### Maroondah Group is hosting an APS Victoria Meeting

**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2019**

Federation Estate, 32 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood

Have you ever wanted to visit CRISP (Croydon Ringwood Indigenous Species Plant) Nursery? Then you can – on Saturday 2nd March.

Join the APS Victoria Committee members for morning tea at approximately 11am and have a propagating demonstration, then view the nursery before joining the committee again at Federation Estate for lunch. It would be lovely to have folk support the good work the many volunteers do at CRISP, and some of them may even join us for a chat.

In the afternoon we will visit Bill & Sue’s garden at 13 Conos Court, Donvale, where there will be an opportunity for a chat, to relax or to buy from the APS book store. The afternoon will conclude no later than 4.00 pm.

Any queries, comments or suggestions contact Dallas or Bernard Boulton:

[bernard.boulton@bigpond.com](mailto:bernard.boulton@bigpond.com)  
or phone 9729 1538 or 0418 354 838.

# Sturt Pea

## Notes from the talk by Charles Young at the January meeting

Written by Bill Aitchison

Since the formation of Maroondah group in 1966, I believe that we have only ever had two presentations on a single plant species. The first was on the Wollemi Pine (*Wollemi nobilis*), and at our recent January meeting Charles Young spoke to us about Sturt's Desert Pea (*Swainsona formosa*).

Charles noted that this is an iconic plant, South Australia's floral emblem and its image is found everywhere. His first connection with the plant was through stamp collecting. He guided us through the plant's history, botany, pollination mechanism and his experiences in growing it.

The first European to see the plant was William Dampier in 1699 along the Western Australian coast. This was followed by Allan Cunningham, who was the botanist on Oxley's overland expedition out of Sydney, exploring the Lachlan Macquarie River system. The explorer Charles Sturt had an association with the plant during his expeditions (hence the common name applied to the plant).

The genus *Swainsona* honours Dr Isaac Swainson (1746-1812). There are about 85 species of *swainsona*, all endemic to Australia. Their roots nodulate and fix nitrogen in the soil. They have a hard seed coat that is impermeable to water. Some are toxic and some have the hallucinogenic drug DMT.

Their flower is typical of a pea. There is a boss (generally bright purple or black), the petals that stand up are called the standard or flag, and the ones that remain down are called the keel (like a ship analogy). There are wings on the petals as well. The structure of the flower has evolved for bird pollination.

The flowers come in a range of colours, due to natural variation. For example, you can get white on white, crimson bosses instead of black, red bosses on

white and a tripartite one (black boss, red on the top, white on the keel).

Charles commented that he hasn't found it hard to grow. He hasn't grown grafted plants but ones on their own roots, and generally in planter boxes. He often grows a number of different species in each planter box, and illustrated this beautifully with a couple of examples. One pot featured Sturt Pea with *scaevola*, *Leucophyta brownii*, *myoporum* and *chrysocephalum*, and the other featured Sturt Pea with Kangaroo Paw, *lechenaultia*, *veronica* and *brachyscome*. He finds planter boxes decorative, easy to move (e.g. in or out of the sun or shade) and also the media can be changed to support growing different types of Australian plants.

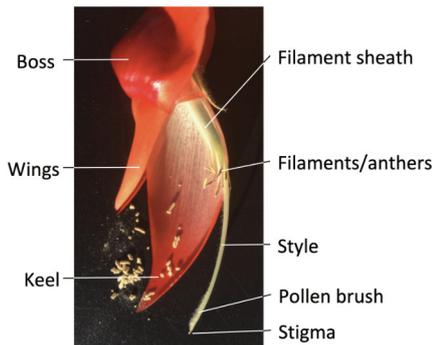
Charles has worked in the Orchid Conservation Laboratory where everything has to be done hygienically, and this experience has rubbed off on him in preparing his own planter boxes. He cleans all of the components, rinsing the tubs with bleach. He covers the drain holes with a bit of aggregate (washed with bleach

and rinsed off) to give a bit more drainage at the bottom. He then covers this with a geotextile or similar coating. He uses a mix of 3 parts Osmocote Native Plant Mix and 1 part sand. He fills up the planter bowl, plants his plants, waters in with Seasol and subsequently takes care of the bowl.

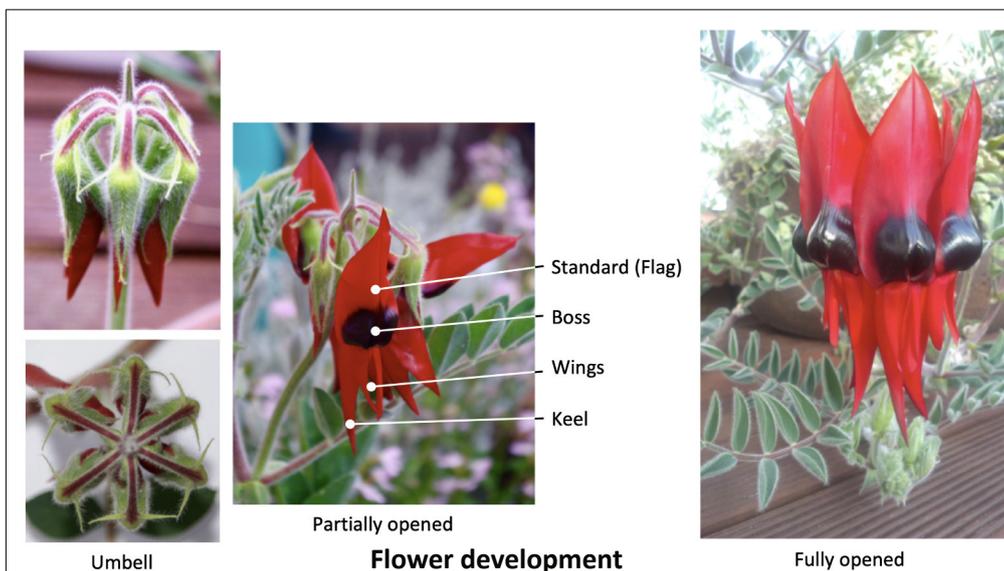
Charles' first Sturt Pea was one purchased from Kuranga Nursery. He found that they do transplant quite well when the roots have not reached the edge of the pot. But this one disliked the hot dry weather – it suffered every day over summer. However, it loved water, fertiliser and mild temperatures.

For his second one, Charles took a cutting from the tip of the plant. He didn't do anything special, dipped it in Yates Cutting Powder, put it in seedling mix, and this worked well.

His third one was grown from commercially purchased seed (e.g. from Kuranga or Bunnings). He used seed starter granules (not compulsory) – ½ teaspoon in a glass with 20 ml water, and treated 6 or 8 seeds. He then boiled some water, left it for about 5 minutes to allow it to cool a little, and then poured this over the seeds. In about a day you can expect to see the radical (root) start to emerge from the seed, and you can then plant them about ½ cm below the



Reproductive organs



surface of the potting mix. Be patient, as some seeds will take days before they develop the radical, just let them sit there.

Once in the potting mix, be careful that the first leaves (cotyledons) do not dry out. Charles covers the pot with Gladwrap with a couple of holes in it, to help keep a moist environment. Once more leaves develop, remove the Gladwrap.

In relation to problems, Charles has found that extreme hot and dry conditions are problematic, but they like a nice warm, sunny position. They also like a lot of water (2 or 3 litres of water in the pot once a week). They love Dynamic Lifter.

When stressed, two spotted mites can be a problem. These are tiny things on the leaves that you can hardly see with the naked eye. You may notice that the plant starts to look sickly, with the leaves going brown and yellow. To treat this, drench the plant with Mavrik. Other problems can be thrips and fusarium wilt.

Not surprisingly, Charles's fascinating talk was followed by a lot of questions from the audience, including the following:

- Best time of year to sow seeds – Charles has tried all different times successfully. He has tried late February; early (Sept/Oct); last year he planted just before winter, and the plant took off in the September sun.
- You can get two seasons from a plant, but the second will not be as good as the first.
- Longevity of seed – Charles suggests that seed needs to be used within 3 years.
- When you purchase a packet of seed, there can be variation in flower colour with the same lot of seed, so the picture on the packet is not necessarily what you will get. Expect a surprise. Also, most have 6 flowers in an

❖ Many natural and cultivated variations in flower colour



umbel, but Charles has also had plants that grow 4, so there is genetic variability in the seed you buy.

- Seed from your own plants may not grow – it seems that birds around here do not know how to pollinate them, so forget the pods on your plant.
- Frost tolerance – plants have been fine with light frost.
- Plants are often grafted on to *Clanthus puniceus*, but *colutea* (a European genus) has also been used for grafting.
- Bruce Schroder has noted that some of his flowers have aborted – Charles suggested this could be fusarium wilt causing a fungal problem on the roots.

Our thanks to Charles for a wonderful talk, a great way to start our 2019 year.

**Postscript:** Charles mentioned that he used the book '*Sturt Pea: a Most Splendid Plant*' by D. E. Symon and M. Jusaitis for some of his information. If you would like a copy, contact Sue and Bill on 9872 3583 or [apsvicbooks@gmail.com](mailto:apsvicbooks@gmail.com).

### Maroondah Member's Sturt Pea Experience

Several of our members took up the 'Sturt Desert Pea Challenge' of growing a grafted plant in whatever conditions they chose. The results have been quite varied, which is very interesting. Some members have put photos on our website showing the progress of their plants, and some of them are shown below.



Tony & Brenda Moore



Bruce Schroder



Eleanor Hodges



Doug & Carol Wightman



Dallas Boulton



Ken Gosbel



Michael Cook



Libby Ward

## Endangered Orchid Species involved in World First

The January 2019 edition of Trust for Nature's *Nature News* reports that a self-sustaining population of an endangered orchid species has been created for the first time. *Caladenia colorata* (Colourful Spider-orchid) is nationally endangered, with small populations remaining in a handful of sites in Victoria and South Australia.

The Colourful Spider-orchid is part of a decade-long Orchid Conservation Program led by the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, and includes teams of volunteers, Trust for Nature, Australian Network for Plant

Conservation, Wimmera Catchment Management Authority, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning, Parks Victoria, Australasian Native Orchid Society, Grampians Threatened Species Hub, and private landowners.

Research Scientist and Orchid Conservation Program leader from the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Dr Noushka Reiter, said this successful reintroduction in the Wimmera region gives scientists the confidence that other endangered orchid species can also be reintroduced.

## Plant of the Month

### *Coronidium waddelliae*

Joe Wilson

This month's plant is *Coronidium waddelliae* (previously *Helichrysum adenophorum* var *waddelliae*). I have chosen this plant because I recently saw it on the walk to Mt Feathertop at Mount Hotham (the only place I have seen it).

It is a lovely small annual or creeping perennial multi-stemmed, erect daisy plant to 60 cm x 60 cm. The fine linear leaves are up to 5 cm long, and the erect 4 cm daisy flowers are pink and white in the bud, opening to a soft white that would be a delight in our gardens. This variety may be propagated from seed or cuttings. It may also be divided as it is a herbaceous perennial.

It is rarer in Victoria than in New South Wales. There it is found in woodlands and heath, and ranges north from the Snowy Mountains and Morton National Park. It is generally confined to the high altitudes of the eastern ranges on the rather dry rocky slopes.



Photo: Joe Wilson

# Member Profile

## Deb Jerkovic

By Sue Guymer

Deb's first gardening experience was when she was about 6 years old and her Mum gave her a "dead" area of the garden. She couldn't buy any plants so she had to propagate from what was already in the garden. She remembers having success with nasturtiums, but was shattered when her mum's friend happily ate the nasturtium flowers. She always loved plants, but her love of native plants came later.

For many years Deb rented with various friends while working and studying. She studied Science at Monash University, and in 1981 she researched grevilleas for a Project, and was blown away by the diversity and methods of pollination. Without a garden of her own, Deb had over 200 pot plants at any one time – making moving house a logistical nightmare!

Then life became busy. She married Michael, and eventually daughter Nicki came along. They bought their current house in Glen Iris in 2001. Deb never liked the garden full of iceberg roses, camelias and lavenders, and she struggled to keep the lawn looking good, especially in summer. One day a mother at school said "You don't have to have a lawn". This was a light bulb moment, and the seed was sown.

Not long after, Maroondah member Eleanor Hodges, who lives across the road from Deb, opened her garden for Open Gardens Australia. Deb went along and loved it. The most important thing to her was the smell of this garden full of Australian plants – particularly the eucalypts and prostantheras. Deb immediately thought this is what she wanted – a garden not just for humans to enjoy!

She approached Eleanor to ask how to go about creating such a garden. Eleanor put Deb in touch with Bev Hanson, who did a plan for the front garden, and brought in Tom Orton with his bobcat. The front garden was planted in mid-2012, and the back garden was done later the same year (by the same team, of course). Deb did the planting and has not looked back. She has noticed greater harmony between wildlife and plants, and nothing like the damage the possums caused with the exotic plants.

Knowing Eleanor, Bev and Tom led Deb to APS Maroondah. One of the things she loves about our group is the talks which explain the science behind the plants – biology, chemistry etc. Botanical names fascinate her and bring back memories of long forgotten Latin classes.

Around this time the FJC Roger's Seminar '*Dream It, Design It, Do It*' was held and Deb soaked up the information on selecting and caring for a habitat garden. Interestingly, she now prefers foliage to flowers, and there is a strong focus on habitat for birds, insects, etc. For this reason, she doesn't use chemicals on her garden.



Photo: Nicki Jerkovic

One thing which pleased her when she was converting the front garden was that passers-by would stop to talk to her about the garden and these unfamiliar plants. She has now also planted out the nature strip, mainly with native clumping grasses. A few other plants were included, but these tended to "walk" when they flowered.

Deb opened her garden for Open Gardens Australia in 2014, and her garden was photographed at the same time for the book by Angus Stewart and AB Bishop '*The Australian Native Garden*'. She has had visits by various garden groups, including Maroondah group, local Council groups and the RHS Garden Rambles. Deb encourages everyone to have at least one native plant. She feels that we owe it to First Australians to make some effort to restore the damage that has been done to the Australian environment.

Deb has also been an advocate at Bunnings in Nunawading, where she has done two talks, and organised a fund-raising sausage sizzle, with Maroondah members talking to nursery customers about Australian plants. She is always looking for ways to spread the word about our amazing plants and the beautiful birds they can attract into any size garden.

She loves feeling connected with nature, so she sought out recycled timbers for the floors, vanities and stairs when their house was renovated. They were originally cut from large beams presumed to be from old growth forests, and used in a factory that was built over 100 years ago. The timbers used are from seven different Victorian eucalypt species, each of which have their own character and story.

Non-gardening interests include playing bridge and doing jigsaws. In addition to her fish pond and worm farm, Deb also has an Australian Shepherd dog called Jess, and two cats called Chilli and Pepper.

**Postscript:** *Gardening Australia* magazine will have an article on Deb's garden (and Eleanor's), possibly in May this year.

# Upcoming Events

## Friday Meetings

- 15<sup>th</sup> February**  
Members' Night
- 15<sup>th</sup> March**  
Nick Monaghan – *A Macro Photographic Journey through Nature*
- 12<sup>th</sup> April**  
Emmaline Bowman – *Garden Design using Australian Plants*
- 17<sup>th</sup> May**  
Royce Raleigh – *Hakeas*
- 21<sup>st</sup> June**  
Robert King – *Mangroves*

## Garden visits and other Maroondah activities

- 17<sup>th</sup> February** – Doongalla Forest, Mt Dandenong
- 17<sup>th</sup> March** – 'Fondata 1872' landscape at restaurant, Kangaroo Ground
- 14<sup>th</sup> April** – Margaret James' garden and Rosanna Parklands
- 19<sup>th</sup> May** – Frank O'Dea and Diane Hedin gardens, Box Hill South

## New Member

Welcome to Cathy Kirby of Donvale. We hope you settle into the Group, and look forward to your participation.

## APS Victoria, other Regions and ANPSA events

**30<sup>th</sup> September – 4<sup>th</sup> October 2019**  
ANPSA National Conference, Albany WA.

## Manningham Council Environment Seminars

First Wednesday of the month – 7:20 pm at River View Room, Grand Hotel, Warrandyte (Melway M23 E12).  
**6<sup>th</sup> March** – Billy Griffiths on '*Deep Time Dreaming – Uncovering Ancient Australia*'.

## FNCV Botany Group Talks

Third Thursday of the month – Starts at 8.00 pm at FNCV Hall, 1 Gardenia Street, Blackburn (Melway map 47 K10).  
**21<sup>st</sup> February** – Dr Sapphire McMullan-Fisher on '*Mates – Mycorrhiza & Endophytes – fungi that plants need*'.  
**18<sup>th</sup> April** – Andre Messina on '*VicFlora: species updates, writing keys, uploading images and more*'.

## Open Gardens Victoria Workshop

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February**  
**10 am – 11.30 am**

### Attracting Native Bees

Katrina Forstner, founder of *Buzz and Dig*, will conduct a workshop in Preston. Participants will make their own bee hotel using recycled materials.  
**\$30 for workshop – bookings required**

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## Australian Plants Society Maroondah Inc.

Postal address: P.O. Box 33, Ringwood 3134  
Email: maroondah@apsvic.org.au

### Newsletter contributions:

Contributions for the March 2019 Newsletter should be sent to Sue Guymer (aitchguy@gmail.com) no later than

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

Check out the Maroondah Group website at [australianplantsoc.wix.com/maroondah](http://australianplantsoc.wix.com/maroondah)

Member page login: mrndh2016

How about making a contribution to the website?



And have a look at the APS Vic website at [www.apsvic.org.au](http://www.apsvic.org.au)

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## Committee

Bruce Schroder	President	9728 1342
Bill Aitchison	Vice President	9872 3583
Peter Rogers	Secretary	9801 6946
Joe Wilson	Treasurer	9812 0209
Jan Nicholls	Membership Secretary	9893 4422
Sue Guymer	Newsletter Editor	9872 3583
Graeme Nicholls	Newsletter production	9893 4422
Alison Rogers		9801 6946
Barry Ellis		0403012109
Dallas Boulton		9729 1538
Debbie Jerkovic		9885 7276