

Dianella admixta



AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY
SOUTH EAST MELBOURNE REGION INC.

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MARCH NEWSLETTER 2018

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month, February to December except November.

The venue is the Hughesdale Community Hall, Cnr Poath and Kangaroo Roads, Hughesdale (MEL 69 C7)

Visitors are always very welcome.

COMMITTEE:

PRESIDENT: John Thompson thomme@netspace.net.au
DEPUTY LEADER: Helen Appleby
SECRETARY: Helen Appleby
TREASURER: Catherine Irwin irwincs@hotmail.com
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NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Marj Seaton normarjs@bigpond.com
COMMITTEE: Amanda Louden amandalouden@icloud.com

Please forward any newsletter contributions, comments or photos to Marj at 36 Voumard Street, Oakleigh South 3167 or to the email address above.

Deadline for the April newsletter is March 23rd

MARCH MEETING

Tuesday 6 March 2018

8pm Hughesdale Community Hall

Cnr Poath and Kangaroo Roads, Hughesdale

Speaker: Mike Beamish Topic: "The Top End"

Mike writes:

I'm 54 and still working casual part-time in the power industry in the Latrobe Valley. I live in the foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges in the small township of Boolarra on a small house block with my wife Cathy. The kids have flown the coop, so I spend my leisure time playing in my mainly native garden, drowning all those non-indigenous plants (our average annual rainfall over the past 25 years is 925mm or 37 inches) that catch my eye from around the country. Otherwise, I'm socialising with the Friends of Morwell NP and the APS Latrobe Valley Group, of which I've been a member for 20 years or so and on their committee (currently as Leader) for 18 years.

In late 2015, my wife and I purchased a 10-year-old motorhome with the aim of taking 6 months of long service leave and doing some travelling. From May through to November 2016 we travelled about 26000km, taking 3 weeks to reach Broome from home and then spending 8 weeks backtracking through the Top End and Kimberley regions before heading down the west coast to the south-west corner and back home via Esperance and the Nullarbor. The presentation I will show you covers the small parts of the Northern Territory that we visited in early May, plus a week in early June.

2.

RAINFALL RECORDS

The following are our rainfall records for 2018 (in mm) so far.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Oakleigh South	67.6												67.6
Highett													
Hampton													
Cranbourne South	47												47
Caulfield Sth													
Elsternwick	63.3												63.3

PHOTO COMPETITION

As mentioned at our last meeting, the committee would like to run a photographic competition with the idea of creating a calendar for 2019.

It is suggested that members submit up to three photographs of the largest file size possible (to enable good clear prints), preferably of flowers or floral scenes of some kind, to be voted on by those present at the AGM. It was agreed that we would want landscape format, and that the calendar part would be large enough to write in engagements. More details later (as we work them out!) but in the meantime, start perusing your photographic libraries and/or get out there with your cameras and take some shots in preparation.

NUYTSIA NEWS

It is with sadness that we report that Cranbourne Gardens' Nuytsia tree is no more. Last week's winds were just too much and the tree blew over and the area is now fully cleared. It is hoped that one or more of the cuttings taken by the nursery come good.

FEBRUARY MEETING

"Confessions of an Eremophilophile"

A good roll up gathered to hear Anne Langmaid talk about Eremophilas. Sadly, technology let us down (again) so we had to make do with two laptops. Although the text wasn't able to be seen by most, the photos were readily seen so we survived!

Anne has been a member of APS Keilor plains for 24 years. Her first eremophila was a grafted *E. maculata* X *E. brevifolia* which has flowered every day since then. Her garden is dry, has perfect drainage and is quite windy – eremophila heaven.

There are 221 species and 40 yet to be named, with many subspecies and forms. Eremophilas belong to the Scrophulariaceae family (the snapdragon family) and are endemic to Australia. The common name is "emu bush" though it is a myth that eremophilas need an emu to digest the seed. There is one species indigenous to the greater Melbourne area – *E. deserti* and this plant has separate male and female flowers.

They show a variety of sizes from the one tree (*E. bignoniiflora*) to ground covers. Some are broom like. "Big Poly" (right) is a natural hybrid with *E. polyclada* growing to 4m X 4m. They hybridise naturally and there are many hybrids available. They will only cross if in relatively close proximity.



The flower has a calyx with five lobes, four stamens and 1 stigma. The flower is tubular with five petals, one being larger and curved back. The flower exhibits the full range of rainbow colours with many having different colours for buds and flowers eg *E. racemosa*.

3.

Anne told us of the two flower types:

1. Insect pollinated, about 81%, which have three petals up and 2 recurved back eg *E. platycalyx*.
2. Bird attracting, about 19%, which have 1 petal recurved back and the rest fused. Examples of this type include *E. maculata* and *E. glabra*.

Insect pollinated plants have a wider flower with a landing area and short stamens. Often there are pollen guides (often only seen under UV light). The insect has to land and seek the pollen, then back out of the flower. Colours are usually purple, blue, lilac, cream, white.

Bird pollinated plants are colourful, long and tubular with stamens protruding and petals fused.



Pollen is therefore available on the outside of the plant. Of course, insects will also be able to pollinate these. They are heat loving, and may have hairy, resinous foliage. Examples are *E. Mirabilis*, *E. subfloccosa* and *E. fasciata* (left).

The majority of eremophilas are from WA and like acid conditions. They tend to occur in a band registering 200 – 400mm rain in one or two events. Some occur on quite heavy clay but most are in sand, sandy loam or stones. Full sun is best or part shade and they love 40° days!

They are hard to grow from seed, so cuttings are best. Use Clones and only take cuttings in months containing an R. Some are even hard to grow from cuttings so grafting is common but you do have to make sure that buds below the graft are regularly removed. A ziplock bag over the foliage is useful.

Nicking or abrading the seed doesn't seem to work. Smoke may work sometimes. Leaching often helps to remove any chemical holding back germination. Pinch out the growing tips often. *E. nivea* needs to have an open centre so prune to ½ or ¾, leave until new growth appears before pruning further.

Some cope with frost but protection is recommended.

Always water in new plants eg fortnightly but monitor. Overwatering kills many eremophilas.

Anne then showed us a collection of some favourites and these included *E. aureivisca* (blue flowers, soft wispy foliage, calyces age to burgundy after flowers done), *E. hygrophana*, *E. subteretifolia* (wonderful groundcover), *E. glabra* eg "Kalbarri carpet", *E. debilis* (fruits very decorative), *E. Yana Road*, *E. granitica* (knee high) *E. oppositifolia* (6 colour varieties – everyone should have one), *E. calorhabdos* (pink, birds love, prune), *E. muelleriana* (dark purple flowers though bush often has a horrible shape), *E. nivea* (grey, gorgeous, fast growing, dead in 5-7years), *E. glandulifera* (lipstick colour, covered in flowers), *E. mackinlayi* (grey, to 1m) and her very favourite *E. lachnocalyx* which she grows in a pot. *E. glabra* has two forms, one upright, the other a ground cover. There are 8 recognised subspecies.

SPECIMEN TABLE



As part of her presentation, Anne also brought in a large number of colourful, well labelled Eremophila species which we could peruse at the end of our meeting (right).

John supplied pieces of two grevilleas: *G. globosa*, WA, summer flowering, spherical flowers, and *G. armigera* with



its black styles and very prickly leaves (left). He also had a branch of *Ptilotus divaricatus* from WA. This plant is found from the central parts of WA up to the Pilbara. It is a scrambling to climbing plant, summer flowering with round fluffy flower heads.

4.

Lance provided a branch of a *Coprosma* sp in full berry (right), quite prickly and growing to 1 ½ to 2m. A quick taste of a berry found it sweet and slightly gelatinous.



Mandy's collection included *Calytrix fraseri* – vivid purple starry flowers growing in a pot - *Lythrum salicaria* (purple loosestrife) which grows in and will root in water, perennial; a white westringia; *Acacia harveyi* which is just starting to flower but will continue in flower for months; *Thomasia solanacea* (*Plant of the month*), and *Baeckea camphorosmae*. This last has been in a pot for years, forms a low shrub H~15cm but quite wide, flowers all year.

Marj invited members to tear a leaf off her *Backhousia citriodora* for a lemon myrtle tea for supper.

Her *Rhododendron lochiaie* is bearing many flowers. A gift from Bev Truscott, the plant is quite old, but when potted on showed a very shallow root system. Blue flowers of *Veronica arenaria* are a welcome addition to a summer garden with not much colour. Her last specimen was of a *Pandorea jasminoides* "Rosea" (right) a tough climber with showy pink flowers.

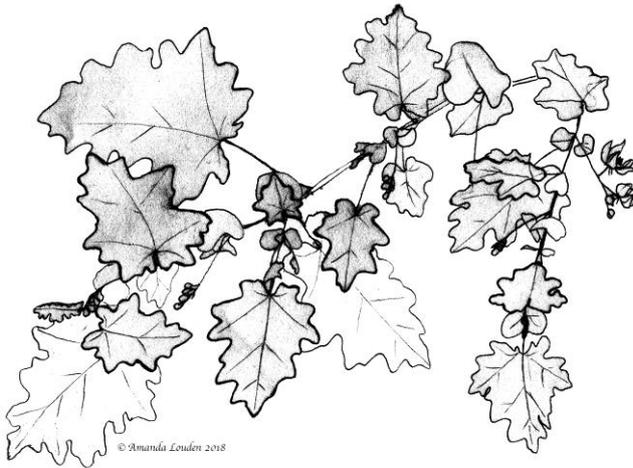


Pick of the Bunch February 2017

***Thomasia solanacea* (Sims) J.Gay**

Specimen grown by Amanda Loudon

Thomasia solanacea is a small to medium sized, 1-2.5m x 1-2.5m, bushy shrub from the Stirling botanical district in WA. It occurs from the coast around Albany north to Jerramungup and Gnowangerup. The foliage is most attractive, with the large, velvety oak-like leaves giving a dense cover. The flowers are produced in racemes slightly longer than the leaves. They are pink or pale pink to whitish and are produced in spring to summer, although in cultivation flowering may occur at other times.



It is best grown in a partly protected position in well drained soil but will cope with full sun. It will tolerate dryness once established. Propagation is from cuttings.

Thomasia is a member of the Malvaceae family. A family of c.1500 species in more than 70 genera with 25 genera and c.180 species occurring in Australia. Australian genera include *Androcalva*, *Brachychiton*, *Commersonia*, *Lasiopetalum* and *Lysiosepalum*.

The family contains the plants that yield cola (*Cola acuminata*) and cocoa (*Theobroma cacao*) so without them there would be no chocolate or cola flavoured drinks. Thomasias are found in the south west of Western Australia with one species, *Thomasia petalocalyx*, being found in WA, SA and Victoria.

The English botanist John Sims first described it in 1812 as *Lasiopetalum solanaceum*. In 1821, Swiss botanist Jaques Étienne Gay transferred the species to the genus *Thomasia*.

Thomasia is named after Pierre and Abraham Thomas and Abraham's sons who were collectors of Swiss plants. The specific name, *solanacea*, is in reference to the similarity with the genus *Solanum*.

5.

MARCH MEETING

WRITE-UP: Norm Seaton

SUPPER: Amanda Loudon (1 litre milk please)

DIARY OF EVENTS

- March 6** "The Top End". Mike Beamish
March 17 APS Vic Committee of Management meeting, host APS Wyndham (See next "Growing Australian")
March 21 - 25 MIFGS - APS Vic has a stall. We will have at least one entry into the Hanging Basket Competition.
April 3 "Eucalyptus camaldulensis". Alex Smart OAM
May "Button Wrinkleworts", Ben
August AGM and members' slides. Photo competition.
October 20 - 21 FJC Rogers seminar, Horsham, "Goodeniaceae". Register interest now fjcrogersseminar2018@gmail.com See poster under 'Promotions'

Plant Sales 2018

- March 17, 18** Cranbourne Friends plant sale, 10 - 4 (Mel K10) Cash preferred.
April 21 Geelong plant sale, 40 Lovely Banks Road, Lovely Banks (Mel 431 D6), entry \$2 per adult or \$5 per car. 8:30am - 5pm
April 28 Yarra Yarra plant sale. Eltham Senior Citizens Centre, 903 Main Road, Eltham
May 5 APS Mornington plant sale (tentative)
May 12 APS Melton Bacchus Marsh plant sale, St. Andrews Uniting Church, Gisborne Road, Bacchus Marsh, 9-4

PROMOTIONS



Saturday October 20, Sunday October 21
Have you booked your accommodation yet?
Registrations will open in April.
To receive newsletters email:
fjcrogersseminar2018@gmail.com



**Cranbourne Friends
Royal Botanic Gardens
Victoria Inc**

**PLANT SALE
AUTUMN
2018**



Rhododendron vitifolium Drawing: John Armstrong

**Saturday 17 &
Sunday 18 March**

10.00am - 4.00pm

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria -Cranbourne

Plant list available one week prior to sale - www.rbgrfriendscranbourne.org.au

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MAROONDAH'S BUSHLAND TREASURES

*An exhibition of original watercolours
by Botanical Illustrator Ruth Jackson*

EXHIBITION DATES:
Friday January 19th to
Friday March 9th 2018

OFFICIAL OPENING:
Thursday January 18th
5:30PM - 7:00PM

MAROONDAH
ACCESS GALLERY
Maroondah Federation Estate
32 Greenwood Ave Ringwood

