



# Bendigo Native Plant Group Inc.

P. O. Box 669, Bendigo, Victoria, 3552.

Reg. No. A0014487F

**President:** Ian Evans 0418 507 213 **Secretary:** Sandra Birch 0400 149 319

Email: [bendigo@apsvic.org.au](mailto:bendigo@apsvic.org.au)

**BNPG is a district group of Australian Plants Society - Victoria and Bendigo membership requires membership of APS - Vic.**

## October 2018 Newsletter

Greetings -

First and more most - a big thankyou from the committee for your marvellous support of the Flower Show. I for one was most grateful that more flowers arrived on Saturday and Sunday meaning that our display stayed looking fresh. Like last year, we learnt a few things about operating in the new venue although overall we've come along in leaps and bounds.

And a big welcome to our new members - Rodney; Jane; Marg; Noel & Kathryn; Ian; and Sandra. We hope you will enjoy being part of our group.

So what's next? Our AGM! For all those who tremble at the thought of an AGM never fear - our AGM is usually short and to the point. There is one thing however, for consideration and not necessarily resolution. At our committee meeting on Tuesday the following motion was carried.

*Moved Karin Harding that we change the name of our group from Bendigo Native Plant Group Inc. to APS Bendigo Inc. Motion to be put to the 2018 AGM. Seconded by Lisa Iles. Motion Carried.*

So, what does this mean? There has been discussion at committee meetings for some months about this proposed name change. Being named 'APS .....' brings us into line with most Victorian groups. It also quickly identifies us as members of the Australian Plant Society.

We have played with names such as:

**APS Bendigo and District or Region** (but where is the boundary for the said District or Region?);

**APS Central Victoria** (but then are we not Northern County and if so does that muddle us with Echuca/Moama?);

**APS Bendigo and Castlemaine** (but our members are from Heathcote, Barfold, St.Arnaud, etc. as well as (C'maine).

**So, we have reasoned that as we meet in Bendigo and have our flower show in Bendigo the just plain 'APS Bendigo Inc.' allows people to know where our group is centred. It is also a short name which will suit advertising, logos etc.**

As I have said, this motion is possibly the start of a process but may well be decided on the night. Have a think.

Of course when the AGM is over we'll be hearing from Ian about his recent trip to the far north west!

Now then, a little while ago members were asked if they had any interest in visiting the Ceramet Solar site at Bridgewater. There were a few replies. To visit we need between 8 and 20 people and tours are only on Wednesday mornings - 10 or 10.30 am. They charge \$5 per person and that money all goes to local charity. So - are there any more takers? If not I'll arrange a couple of dates and we'll see which works best. And I hear the Bridgewater Bakery is well worth a visit! Lunch???

Lastly - do come to Bung Bong!!

- Sandy

**7.30 pm Tuesday 16 October 2018**  
**Annual General Meeting followed by**  
***Ian Evans' Great Grevillea Hunt***

Supper - Jan Waller & Joan Sullivan

**NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING**

7.30 pm 13 November 2018, 35A Murphy St, East Bendigo

### Bung Bong Excursion

123 Box Flat Track, Avoca

**Saturday 10 November, 2018**

*From Maryborough take Pyrenees Hwy for 21k then turn left into Box Flat Track*

*From Avoca take Pyrenees Hwy for 5k then turn right into Box Flat Track*

Depart 9 am meeting rooms Old High Street, Golden Square. Car-pooling \$7 per passenger.

Return before 5pm

**BYO picnic lunch and snacks including water!**

Tea and coffee supplied.

*(Feel free to bring some coins to drop in the garden wishing well! This will help the garden thrive.)*

**F  
L  
O  
W  
E  
R**



**S  
H  
O  
W**

Meetings are held at the Golden Square Community Hall, Old High St, Golden Square, on the third Tuesday of each month from February to November. The room is open from 7.10 pm, for viewing of display specimens. Program begins at 7.30 pm.

**September 2018 Presentation**  
**Bush Foods with Sharnie Hamilton**

*Photos - S. Hamilton.*

Sharnie has been living in the Bendigo area for the past eight months. She is from Deniliquin which is home to the Wamba Wamba Perrapa Perrapa people. Her previous employment was also with plants and she is now the Koori Heritage Advisor for Parks Victoria where she is doing a cultural heritage project about aboriginal plants and will be planting some at Epsom.

Speaking to a group such as ours was a first for Sharnie and she took us on an enthusiastic journey of plants found in this region that were important to the local Dja Dja Wurrung people. First was Kangaroo Grass. This was important for both food and fibre. The seed was ground to make flour for damper and the leaves and stems were used for making string, fish nets and bags.



John Tann Wikicommons CC BY 2

Golden Wattle *Acacia pycnantha* sometimes produces gum from the trunk. Sharnie told us that chewing it gives a great sugar hit although the down side is that the texture is something akin to .... well something that comes from a nose! Much better to swill the gum in water to produce a sweet drink. Fibre from the plant is also used to make string for bags and baskets.

Bark was peeled from Red River Gums to make shields and canoes. This left large scars which can still be seen today. Wood from these trees was also used for making clapsticks and the leaves were used for smoking ceremonies along with Cherry Ballart. Sharnie is making a Coolamon from the bark of this tree - and this is the season of the year to harvest the bark. Coolamons are a long shallow oval dish and they are used for carrying food, water and babies. Sharnie has carved the outside of her Coolamon and will next carve an image of the tree on the inside. It looks amazing.

Common Reed *Phragmites australis* is used from the roots up. The roots are roasted and once cooked they are peeled then eaten - they taste like mashed potato although a bit runny. Rope is woven from the leaves and root fibres spun into string. Dry material is also used in the fire making process. **Cumbungi** is this plant's native name.



The green tops, roots and spore cases of Nardoo are all edible **BUT** must be prepared correctly. This can involve steaming, pounding, winnowing and baking before use. This is very important as it rids the seeds of their extremely high and therefore toxic thiamine content. Perhaps best not to try until you get a 'Master Class'!

Water ribbons *Triglochin procera* grow in water and the tubers look a bit like macadamia nut kernels. They can be eaten raw or roasted which makes them taste like yummy roast spuds. The stems can also be eaten and taste like celery. In this picture you can see the 'ribbons' lying on the surface of the water!

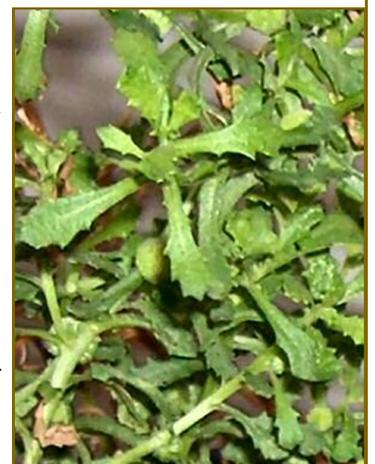


River Mint **kapel-kup** is for women's business - also for colds and flu. It makes a wonderful tea. Latin name is ***Mentha australis***.

Water Pepper (*below - flowers and foliage*) is great for catching fish. Just throw some onto the water and it stuns the fish so they float. You then scoop up what you need and leave the rest which will recover and swim happily away. ***Persicaria hydropiper*** in Latin, **kira-kumba-wil** in language.



So we've made canoes, Coolamons, string, bags and nets. We've eaten a good fish feed accompanied by veges and herbs. Now for your body. Old Man Sneeze Weed ***Centipeda cunninghamii*** is used for cleansing the skin, eczema in particular. It is also used as a tea - boil it down then drink - it's good for your insides! Native name is **Gukwonderuk**.



Sharnie's Coolamon has holes down each side and she told us that they are for the string which she will soon make and attached. A work in progress! Mind you, she confessed that she would rather be chasing and caring for plants rather than making string or weaving baskets! When she does make the string it will be done with damp fibres which will then tighten as they dry. She has made string before and brought some to show us along with a possum skin that is the first for a cloak - she only needs another 12! One was suggested she should source some from New Zealand!!

We asked what her favourite plant was from those she had told us about. Quick as a flash she grinned and said 'Water Pepper' because it takes away toothache!

She told us that basket making is big in this area using Spiny Pinrush *Juncus acutus* and that Aunty Marilyn Nichols is mad on it and runs workshops. If you are interested then she can be contacted via the Dja Dja Wurrung, 1/70 Powells Avenue, Bendigo. Ph: 5444 2888

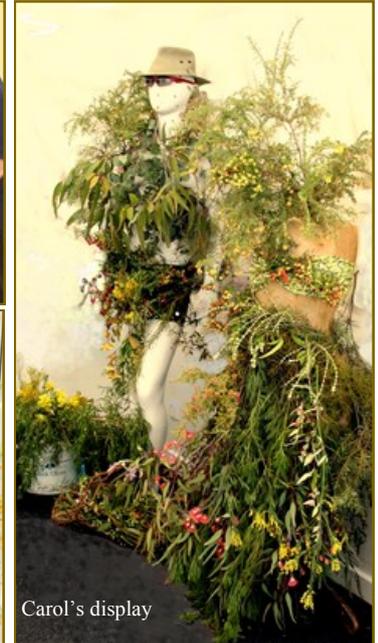
Lastly, Sharnie asked that we let her know if we find any food plants in the bush so she can know where plants are that may need protecting. She also hopes we may be able to help her propagate some plants for revegetation at some time in the future.

We thank her so much for sharing her knowledge with us.



*(As Sharnie left she told me that there were more plants she could have spoken about but as she is not used to doing presentations didn't want to take too long. I think that means we should ask her back some time! - Ed)*

## And now some Flower Show Pics!



## The September Specimen Table

Sydney Oats Wikicommons CC BY 2.0



Sydney Oats Wikimedia CC BY 2.0

Carol's two eucalypts were *Enc. stotei* 'Scarlet Pear Gum' (left) and *Enc. woodwardii* 'Lemon Flowered Gum' (right). The *stotei* is notable for the ribs and the colour of the fruit which start as greenish yellow and at their peak are scarlet before turning more to red brown. It is a slender tree and grows to 5 m making it a good street tree. The flowers are very small (full size in photo) and bright yellow creating a great contrast against the red buds and if you are lucky the plethora of buds and flowers will be hanging on the tree over Christmas!

By contrast, the *woodwardii* has very large flowers in a softer canary yellow. This is a huge tree growing to up to 15 m and Carol's is growing in clay - it likes an alkaline soil. Although huge it is very graceful with fine branches dripping and weeping toward the ground weighed down by big soft yellow flower balls. The foliage is soft grey blueish green and the bark which sheds in ribbons is white blushed with pink, green and sometimes light copper. Who wouldn't want one - if you have the room! There is one near the gate to the Eaglehawk footy ground.

Ian's *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* is the originally collected form of this plant and quite different to many of the *G. rosmarinifolias* that we know. It was first discovered at Coxes River near Bathurst. The naming is obvious as it grows to about a meter and looks just like a Rosemary. Sadly it is nearly extinct in the bush so more people need to grow it. Those that remain in the bush only occur where rabbits can't get to them mainly on cliff faces (and Ian personally knows every one!). They reproduce from suckers. Regarding the local forms of this plant there are short and tall forms. Some never get to flower in the bush as the wallabies trim them to ground level so with no flowers there are no seeds and so they are slowly disappearing.



Bev B told us that *Thomasia purpurea x solanacea* is very showy and very hardy. It needs to be pruned when flowering as the new buds set while the flowers are still on the plant - so - if you leave it until after flowering then you will prune off next year's flowers! Bev's plant is not quite a metre tall and is growing in a dry, lightly shaded position. The purple flowers have a velvety looking black centre.



And Bev also grows *Dampiera rosmarinifolia* in both the purple and pink forms.

It doesn't mind hot sun or a bit of frost.

Growing as a small shrub it is happy in the garden, a pot or hanging basket. The fine leaves and the flowers both resemble rosemary. The pretty flowers bloom from late winter through to Christmas.

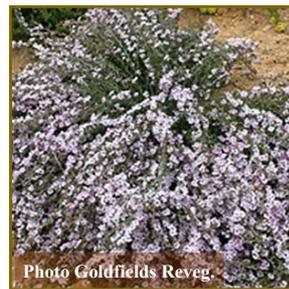


Photo Goldfields Reveg.



### BNPG DIARY

**Saturday 10 November** - Bung Bong excursion

**Tuesday 20 Nov** - Marilyn Bull's Field Trip to the Pilbara and Mt. Augustus WA

**Tuesday 19 February 2019** - bring specimens and a shared tea

**Tuesday 19 March** - Garden Diversity with Chris Long

### Other Diary Dates

**20 October** APS Mitchell Plant Expo, Kilmore Memorial Hall 9am to 3pm

**20 October** ANPS East Gippsland Spring Spectacular, Lucknow Hall, Bairnsdale

**27 October** APS Echuca Moama Native Flower Showcase, Echuca Masonic Lodge, 426 High St. Echuca 9am to 4 pm

**27 & 28 October** APS Ballarat Plant Show 10 am to 4.30 pm Robert Clark Horticultural Centre, Ballarat Bot Gardens, Gillies St.

### **Bendigo Field Naturalists Club**

7.30 pm second Wednesday of the month  
Golden Square Hall, Old High Street, Golden Square