



Correa Mail

Newsletter No. 263 – April 2011

April Plant Sale

Don't forget, our plant sale is on again 9th and 10th April, at Arthur and Linda Pape's property in Lovely Banks. This is a major event on our calendar, and is very well attended by the public. We would love to have everyone at the club involved in some way over the weekend.

There will be a working bee on Sunday 3rd April, from 1.00 pm to get everything the yard cleaned up and ship-shape ... everyone welcome!! Bring gloves, spades, rakes, whipper-snippers etc., and an appetite for work. We would also like a few folks to come along on Friday 8th around 4.30pm to get the kitchen cleaned and ready. Arthur would also be grateful for any assistance on 6th, 7th or 8th. So, if you can spare a couple of hours, give him a call on 0412522394.

There were rosters available at the meeting, but don't worry if you missed out, there are plenty of jobs for everyone. If you would like to volunteer your services over the weekend, contact Denise at deniseandphill@gmail.com

As usual, we are providing morning tea, with the usual goodies to accompany them. If you would like to contribute cakes, biscuits, slices etc. please contact Tina Scheelings on 52297494 so she can co-ordinate and avoid doubling-up.

We also have a display of native flowers and an example of flower arrangement using natives. We would love to have as many flowers from your garden as you can spare. Please bring them along on Friday or Saturday to make our display spectacular.

After the sale closes on Saturday, there will be a BBQ tea for all the workers, with food and drinks and fabulous music supplied. We hope to see everyone there. Oh, and the missing test tubes have been recovered ☺

Barwon Water Sustainable Garden Expo

The Expo in the Steampacket Gardens was held on the weekend of 12th - 13th March. The warm (some would say hot) weather brought the crowds out in force, and our little tent attracted a good share of them.

The massed display of natives from the gardens of Roger, Frank and Ade – with a little help from Phil Vaughan – created a lot of interest. And, with our fabulous banner and the new pamphlets advertising the club in glorious colour, we put on a very professional show.

The oft-heard "I can't believe you get that much colour from natives" ensures that many of the admirers will be at the plant sale in April, and quite a few expressed an interest in joining the club.



Frank and Sheila flying the flag

We would love to have more members available to assist the public, and to promote natives in the garden, at the next Garden Expo. Please consider giving a couple of hours next year. To those who made themselves available over the two days of the expo weekend, a big thank-you for a job well done!

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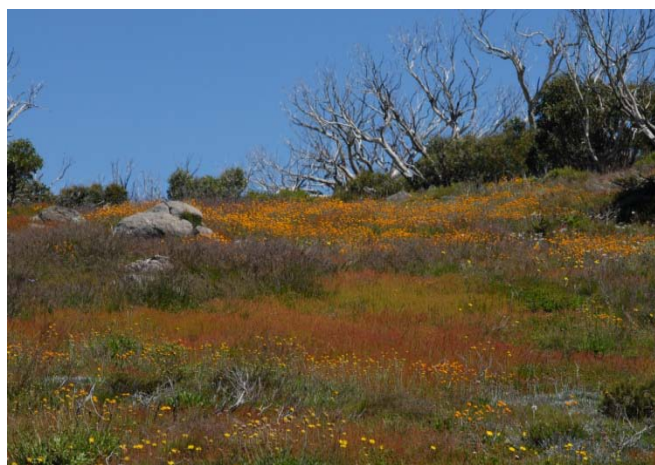
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Our Last Meeting

Our speaker was Frank Scheelings who talked to us about the changes in the flora of the high country after the fires of 2003 and 2006/2007.

Frank has been holidaying in the high country for over 25 years, and has spent many hours wandering the alpine meadows photographing the bewildering variety of plants he has encountered.

The Alpine area of mainland Australia are at altitudes above 1370 m and cover some 5180 sq km or about 0.07% of the land mass. In Tasmania Alpine Areas are above 915 meters, covering 6480 sq km or 10% of that islands land mass. So the total alpine area is a tiny, but very diverse 0.15% of Australia's land mass, and mainly in the form of plateaux.



A typical alpine meadow

The alpine plant communities can be divided into five groups:-

Alpine Herbfields - both tall and short, Sod tussock grasslands (or snowplains), the Heathlands, the Fens, open waters ringed by sedges, the Bogs - permanently wet, sphagnum moss and the Fjeldmark, which are the most open and exposed.

Given the cold temperatures, frequent snow-cover, limited sunshine and harsh winds, growing times are

Alpine Flora

very restricted. Some epacrids, for example, grow only one centimetre per year.

The absence of cattle in the Alpine areas in recent years, (a timely topic, the politics of which Frank deftly avoided) has seen a marked change in the plant communities, an increase in softer grasses and daisies, and a sharp decrease in the number of flies.

The fire of January 2003 burned for 59 days and devastated over 1.3 million hectares, and was the largest fire since 1851. The 2006/2007 fire started from lightning strikes and burned a million hectares over 69 days.

The fires exposed the soil, and removed the cover from streams and sphagnum bogs causing erosion and increasing evaporation. Snow-gum stands were devastated although they have begun to recover in the second year with new growth springing from ligno-tubers.



Snow-gums devastated by the 2003 fires

There was little if any recovery in the first year after the fires – the plants had not had a full growing season – and it was not until the second summer that a real change could be seen. Many different plants took advantage of the reduced competition to dominate for brief periods, but gradually the balance is being restored.

Some of the Eucalypts growing lower on the mountain have not recovered and the risk of dead trees falling saw areas of Mount Buffalo and elsewhere closed to hikers.



Leucochrysum albicans

However slowly, the high country is recovering. And Frank's magnificent photos gave us all an idea of why he has been returning to the area for over 25 years.

On the Table

The table was a little bare this month, but there was still quite a diverse display, given the time of year. Banksias were abundant with *Banksia speciosa*, *menziesii*, *baxterii*, *burdettii*, *marginata*, *nutans* and *occidentalis* all represented. Interestingly, there were a number of *Chamelaucium*s in flower – definitely confused plants. There were some lovely *Eremophila*s and *Correa*s, a beautiful red *Verticordia grandis*, and a decidedly smelly *Grevillea leucoptra* – known as 'Smelly Socks', and for good reason!. *Persoonia pinifolia* with its delicate foliage and bright yellow terminal flowers is a stunning plant which is having a good year, and there were wonderful colours in the *Hemiandras*, *Croweas* and *Calathamus*. There was also a lovely little Eucalypt 'Moon Lagoon' with

masses of tiny white flowers. Growing 4 metres it would make an ideal garden plant.

Plant of the Month

Di Royce won the raffle this week, and, as is customary, she got to choose the plant of the month. She chose the rather striking *Ceratopetalum gummiferum*, the NSW Christmas Bush, which was brought in by Brendon Stahl.

Brendon wrote ... "The *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* is endemic in NSW, where it is common in rainforest and open forest. It is widely cultivated in gardens because of its massed display of red sepals after flowering. It has white flowers before the red sepals form. The tall shrub or small bushy tree will respond to heavy pruning. It is very hardy and ideally suited to gardens, where it remains compact and bushy. Not affected by frost.

Best colouring is obtained by planting in a sunny position.

In my garden, it was planted in July 2001 and is 4.5 metres tall, so due for pruning. Our soil is sandy."



Ceratopetalum gummiferum, NSW Christmas Bush



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My Staw-flowers

Kaitlyn Biro

I was delighted to receive this article from Kaitlyn Biro, aged 5. Kaitlyn and her mum, Debbie, have been growing Strawflowers, *Helichrysum sp.*, and Kaitlyn wanted to share her joy with us. She writes

'Hi to all the garden club people.

I wanted to show you this picture of mine and Mum's staw-flowers.

Last year, a long time ago we mixed the seed in special dirt and some of our sandpit sand. Then I threw it out in the garden and nothing happened. We went on a big holiday and when we come home they were beautiful.

I have just started school this year, and we had beautiful sunflowers near the prep rooms. Mum showed my photo at the kids gardening club, and it was decided that would be our next mass display.

Kaitlyn Biro ... Mini APS member'



Kaitlyn and her Straw-flowers

Thank you, Kaitlyn, I hope you become an inspiration to others, and prompt them to write articles for our magazine, too. ☺

Some More Plant Sales

1 May. APS Yarra Yarra Autumn Plant Sale and Propagation Demonstration from 10.00 am to 3.00 pm. Cnr Main Road & Brougham St, Eltham. Demonstrations are from 1.00 – 2.00 pm.

21 May. APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Annual Plant Sale, Melton

Australian Open Garden Scheme

April 9-10

Cummins Garden 4 Mowbray Court, Doncaster East. Permaculture, informal garden featuring Australian and indigenous plants. Water feature in courtyard, veg. garden, chooks, etc. (0.25 ac.)

April 23- 24

Crimsons Rest 74b Falkingham Road, Mount Evelyn. Terraced garden filled with unusual native and exotic plants chosen for hardiness, structure and colour. Sculpture etc.(0.33 ac.) (NEW)

April 23- 24

King Parrot Retreat 26-66 Wentworths Road, Strath Creek. Primarily Australian plant collections in large landscape. Olives, conifers and proteas too. Creek, bush tucker. (74 ac.)

Our Next Meeting

19th April

Our speaker for the April meeting is Cathy Powers.

Cathy was born in South Dakota, USA and moved to Australia in 1976. Her interest in orchids began about ten years ago and she became serious about photographing them in 2003.

Cathy is a member of the Australasian Native Orchid Society (both Victoria and Geelong). She is also a member of the Friends of the Brisbane Ranges and a committee member of the Brisbane Ranges Wildflower Show (held again in October 2011).

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She is President of the Australian Plants Society Victoria and the treasurer of her local district group (APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh).

Cathy conducts PowerPoint presentations to various community groups on subjects such as the Brisbane Ranges, Fungi, Terrestrial Orchids, Plants & Pollinators, Digital Photography and various themes within these areas. Her topic for our meeting is 'Biodiversity in the Brisbane Ranges'.

You can see some of Cathy's wonderful photos on her website www.banjorah.com

Cathy lives with husband, Ron, on a rural property in the Brisbane Ranges and enjoys having the Brisbane Ranges National Park as her backyard. Cathy is an engaging and informative speaker and I'm sure you will all enjoy her presentation.

Another Favourite

Tony Cavanagh

Tony's favourite this month, the black kangaroo paw *Macropidia fuliginosa*, doesn't really fit the 'favourite' tag. Tony wonders if it's really worth growing?

For almost as long as I have been growing Australian plants, the black kangaroo paw has been one of the most desirable (or at least, a great many people have thought that they should try to grow one). If you see it in its home territory in Western Australia, between Perth and Geraldton, growing in low heath on gravelly, lateritic soils, it is spectacular.

Like the other kangaroo paws, it has long, strap-like leaves to perhaps 50 cm and flowers on multi-headed spikes up to one metre high. Flowering occurs in spring and early summer and the flowers are greenish-yellow with masses of fine, black, sooty hairs. These hairs also occur on the stem, hence the name of "black kangaroo paw". The flowers and leaves arise from underground rhizomes which enables the plant to survive bushfires and re-sprout. Some sources claim the plant can have a life of up to 30 years in the wild.

So far, so good. But have you ever tried to propagate this plant? Seed used to be occasionally

available but I think that this source has long since disappeared. Doesn't really matter, germination was erratic to say the least and on most occasions I tried, the result was zero. Then if you could obtain a plant from somewhere, you might be brave and try divisions. Bad luck here as well, it proved to be almost impossible from divisions, unlike most the *Anigozanthos* kangaroo paws which are usually reasonably easy.



I remember once seeing a few pots at a well known native nursery which appear to have been raised from divisions and they looked so awful I don't think anyone would have bought them. Fortunately, modern science has come to the rescue with tissue-culture and plants raised by this method are now relatively common, for a price.

I think that I have had about four plants over the last 10 years and I cannot say that I have been impressed. At least one never flowered and two others lived for only a couple of years before just dying – flowering as I remember it was very patchy. They are also very susceptible to ink disease so this possibly contributed. My current plant is probably about four years old and was given just about the best position in my garden, near full sun even in winter, on a raised bed in well drained, sandy loam. And how has it repaid me? It flowered in the second year and the

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pictures below show what a great flowers they are, but since then, no more flowers! It is still alive and healthy but shows no inclination to flower again. So in my considered opinion, the black kangaroo paw is not worth trying to grow. However, I would be very pleased if someone can prove me wrong, and if so, please let me in to your secret.



March Day Time Meeting

Debbie Gaskill

On Wed 23 March a dozen members and friends of APS Geelong met on a perfect autumn day to participate in a guided tour of the Geelong GBG featuring plants in their collection used by aboriginal people.

Our 2 guides were most knowledgeable on the topic and though they emphasised those plants used by the local Wathaurung people they also pointed out some of the Gardens' specimens from other parts of the country which are also food plants.

I was surprised at how many of the plants we grow daily in our gardens were in fact used for food or had medicinal properties. Indeed some of these plants are now being investigated by scientists to try to establish whether they have applications in modern medicine.

As well as talking about the plants they spent some time telling us about the activities of Daniel Bunce, the inaugural director of the Geelong Gardens.

Besides being a knowledgeable plantsman and somewhat of an explorer (having participated in one of Leichardt's expeditions) he was instrumental in encouraging the use of Australian plants in collections both here and overseas. In the course of botanising he also made contact with many aboriginal people and compiled vocabularies of some of their languages.



I think all who participated (with the possible exception of Liam Biro) would recommend this particular tour, especially to people from overseas or from outside our district. Our thanks go to Diane for liaising with the Gardens.

Wider Geelong Flora Lecture

8th March

Hosted by the Geelong Field Naturalists' Club, the Wider Geelong Flora Lecture almost escaped my attention in March. Luckily, I had the opportunity to attend, although I missed getting the information into the last newsletter. The speaker was Margaret McDonald, and her topic was 'Special Plants of Anglesea and Airey's Inlet'.

Since her early retirement from teaching, Margaret has lived in the small settlement of Moggs Creek on the edge of the Anglesea District. Over the last 18

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years she has spent many hours observing and photographing the flowers of the area.

Margaret talked with great passion about the endemic species, some of the rarer species, and also shared some of her terrestrial 'orchid secrets' of the district and her involvement in their discovery.



The endemic Anglesea Large Bearded greenhood

Margaret co-authored 'Orchids of the Anglesea District' and edited 'Wildflowers of Anglesea and Airey's Inlet', both essential additions to your library.

In this year's Australia Day Awards Margaret was awarded the Order of Australia Medal for service to conservation and the environment in the Eastern Otway region.

I have asked to be added to the email list for future Wider Geelong Flora lectures so that you can all have an opportunity to attend and enjoy them as I did.

April Bus Trip

Cranbourne

The bus for the Cranbourne trip on Saturday April 2nd is full. We are leaving from the Harvey Norman car-park on Melbourne Road, Corio at 8.30 am sharp. Cost for the bus will be \$10 per head. We can lunch in the café at the gardens or bring a picnic. We hope to have access to the nursery at the gardens for plant sales, so come prepared. We will be stopping somewhere for dinner on the way home and expect to arrive back in Geelong before 10 pm.

May Bus Trip

Bendigo

We have set the date for the Bendigo trip - Sunday 29th May. Among other things, we will visit the Goldfields Revegetation Nursery, a very expansive nursery with a reputation for quality plants. More information to follow.

My Garden

An idea

We have often tried to encourage members to talk about their gardens. After all, gardens are why we all joined the APS. So we've had an idea.

In Spring - the month to be yet determined- we will have a 'My Garden' night. All members are encouraged to do a brief, (or not so brief if you like), pictorial excursion through their garden. Or perhaps you could visit a particular plant or group of plants that are flowering at that time. Most of have a camera, and all of us have a passion for the native plants in our gardens. So please, share that with the rest of us.

If you don't have a camera, or don't think you can take a decent photo, contact us. Frank and Ade have volunteered to take the photos for you, all you have to do is tell us what they are, and what they mean to you. We can even arrange the computer display, all you have to do is talk.

What a great idea! ☺



AUSTRALIAN
PLANTS SOCIETY
— Geelong —

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Some More Photos From The High Country

Photos by Frank Scheelings



Bracteantha subundulata – Golden Everlasting



Stylidium graminifolium – Grass Trigger-plant



Stackhousia pulzinaris - Alpine Candles



Podocarpus lawrencei – Mountain Plum-pine



Arthropodium milleflorum – Pale Vanilla-lily

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