

APS GEELONG 50TH BIRTHDAY

Our 50th birthday coincided exactly with the date for the October meeting, and almost 50 people braved a return to winter to gather at Arthur and Linda Pape's Hothouse Party room to celebrate.

Matt Baars found the minutes of the original meeting and with some sleuth work we were able to contact some of the original members of the group, then called the Society for Growing Australian Plants. It was great to have original members Trevor and Priscilla Pescott, John James and Joan Lindross join us. Of course, John Hastie and Roy Whiteside were also original members and remain part of the club today.



There was a great atmosphere, despite the cold, wet night, and each of the original members was asked to tell us how and why they became involved.

Dinner was a seven course finger food affair, cooked by the caterers under very trying conditions of wind, rain and cold, and while it may have been a bit light on, it was delicious.

The plant table was spectacular, and Nicole Leach did an amazing job labelling all the plants for members' information. I was particularly taken by the more amusing *Grevillea buggerediflknow*, *Guichenotia pinkypurplythingy* and *Clematis noideareana*. ☺



Matt and the mammoth plant table

Frank Scheelings, Sheila Deakin, Matt Leach and Ade Foster presented the plant table and also talked about how they became involved with the club.

It was a very enjoyable evening, and we would like to thank all those members who helped organize and set-up for the evening. And, of course, a big thankyou to Arthur and Linda Pape for once again making their home available to our club.

PLANT OF THE MONTH – *Pandorea pandorana*

By Matt Leach.

Plant of the Month was Pandorea pandorana, the Wonga vine, brought along by Matt Leach. Matt writes ...

The plant is named *Pandorea*, after Pandora of Greek mythology, who allowed evil spirits to escape from a sealed box – this is in reference to the many seeds released from the seed pods in this genus, while *pandorana* means relating to Pandora.

Pandorea is a small genus of 6 species – 3 of which occur in Australia. *P.pandorana* is widespread in eastern Australia, from Cape York to Wilson's Promontory, usually in moist forests. But, it is also found in the drier environments on sand and loamy soil, that occur in central Australia.



It is a vigorous climbing, twining plant, with pinnate leaves, having between three and seven leaflets up to 150mm long. The flowers are tubular, about 20mm long, and are typically creamy/white, with purple markings in the throat. Flowering occurs mainly in spring, but may persist into summer. The flowers are followed by large oblong fruits, which split to reveal elongated, winged seeds.

This is a popular plant in cultivation and there are some lovely cultivars, like Snowbells (a pure white form) and Golden Showers (yellow-bronze form).

Pandorana is a very hardy plant in all regions of Australia, but in the cooler open areas it may be damaged by frost during winter. It is adaptable to any reasonably drained soils and will grow in full sun to partial shade. However, it is very vigorous and can climb quickly into the highest trees. It prefers a reliable water supply, but once established, it will tolerate extended dry periods.

Propagation can be carried out easily from either seed or cuttings, however the selected colour forms do not come true from seed.



My plant was grown from seed collected from the coastal area of Long Island in the Whitsunday Island group in Queensland.

This plant has been growing on Mum and Dad's north facing veranda for the past 20 years. The frost every year, keeps the plant from growing out of control and therefore hasn't grown much in the last 10 years or so. Some years, the frost kills off most of the flowers but this year's lack of frosts has seen it have a better coverage of flowers. I don't think it is a form of *pandorana* that naturally gets covered in flowers, like some of the others. The flowers on this *P. pandorana* have a very strong, and not so pleasant perfume, which on a warm, calm day, can be very noticeable from some meters away. It is currently growing in a raised bed of ironstone rubble.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NOVEMBER MEETING TUESDAY 15TH

Our speaker will be David Radbourn, a landscape architect who works extensively with native plants. He designed and built Olivia and Bill Clarke's Anglesea garden, and will talk to us about his projects. We will have the opportunity to view some of his work the following weekend.

GARDEN VISITS SATURDAY 19TH.

We will meet at Olivia and Bill's house at 14 Third Ave Anglesea at 11:00. Walk to the other gardens Dave has worked on in Third Ave and have lunch at the Clarkes. BBQ facilities, tables, chairs, tea and coffee provided, just bring what you would like to eat, etc.

After lunch another of Dave's Anglesea gardens can be visited which is a bit further away for those who are keen to see more. Of course there are also the orchids nearby and the beach ...

CHRISTMAS BREAK-UP BBQ

We will hold our Christmas break-up BBQ at Serendip Sanctuary in Lara on Saturday December 3rd, between 12.00 noon and 4.00 pm. Members can arrive early, and wander around the sanctuary to their hearts' content. Gates open at 8.00 am.

We will meet for lunch at noon in the group BBQ area, behind the Tea-Tree fence. (Signs will be placed to direct you. The Club will provide sausages and bread, BYO everything else. While there are tables and benches there, chairs would be a good idea.

Gates close at 4.00 pm, so there's plenty of time for a wander after lunch, if you can't make it before. Serendip Sanctuary is at **100 Windermere Rd, Lara**

A TRIP TO THE BENDIGO FLOWER DISPLAY, PLANT & BOOK SHOW - 3 SEPTEMBER 2016

By Phil & Di Royce

Our honourable, venerable Secretary, Bruce, had distributed correspondence from Bendigo Native Plant Group (BNPG) about its Flower Show for the weekend of 3/4 September 2016, and we realised that we had never been to it. Di was keen to see some plants that could fit, and grow, into our Waurin Ponds garden and Phil was curious about the structure of the event.

But when to go? Easy answer - just had to be Saturday, 3rd because Sunday, 4th was Father's Day and Phil already had a date. So we set off at 9.00am with coats and beanies just in case, with a target arrival time of a bit after 11.00 am, allowing for driver swaps.

Got to Ballarat Rd/Geelong Ring Rd intersection and route selection generated some unusual disharmony. We settled on going through Lovely Banks (G'day Arthur & Linda) to Ballan then Castlemaine and Bendigo (actually Kangaroo Flat). Plenty of green paddocks and not a lot of traffic along the way but it did include a Learner driver who was still mastering the skill of maintaining constant highway speed - 95kph became 85kph became 100kph became blah blah, until a flat straight stretch enabled Phil to overtake (and enjoy the drive again).

Mid-morning coffee, tea and leg stretch was welcome in attractive Castlemaine.

At 11.30 am we pulled effortlessly into the Rotary Gateway Park, venue of the Flower etc show. Bit more dis-harmony selecting car park, but before long we were in the Entry queue (Phil exaggerates - Entry line of two others). Chatting with BNPG volunteer ladies Phil picked up a booklet on the table: 'Indigenous Plants of Bendigo'. Immediate reaction was: Pretty useful with colour pictures and explanation of plant form, cultivation requirements, special uses. Volunteer Lady No. 1 asked if I was a resident because the booklet, developed by the BNPG and City of Greater Bendigo, was being given to each resident attending the Flower Show. Phil said honestly that he:-

- was a Geelong resident, and
- wasn't aware that an equivalent booklet existed for the City of Greater Geelong area.

Phil was surprised when Volunteer Lady No. 1 told him to keep that copy and show the COGG what another Council was capable of. We happily paid our entry money (\$3 per person) bought a raffle ticket, and moved into the Flower Show. On entering the room we noticed:

- lots of people,
- numerous round tables with lovely flowers,

- a TV screen with a slide-show of named Australian native flowers
- a corner space where books are on display, but sadly no Bill and Sue, and
- an outside space with various tables holding pots and tubes of plants.

And it wasn't till we started to walk around that we saw another table with only bonsai Australian native plants.



All of the flowers were in bottles, or suitable containers, and labelled. Many visitors were taking photographs of individual flowers, as well as the tables. The three or four BNPG volunteers we saw in this space were readily answering questions and not preventing movement of flowers so particular photos could be taken - so long as people put things back as they were before the photo shoot.



Some of the 15 or so round tables were displaying mixed plant flowers eg small trees, while others were only displaying certain types of plants eg Grevillea; ground covers and creepers; Eremophila. But one flower that struck us both was the Eucalyptus pyriformis x macrocarpa with its stunning, large, red flowers. Evidently, this Eucalyptus is a mallee-type tree of about 3-5 metres and not out of place in a residential-sized property.

The bonsai were just as interesting. Amongst the plants were: *Callistemon brachyandrus*, *Acacia*

declinate (prostrate form) and *Melaleuca linariifolia*. Interestingly, just the week before, my NSW-based cousin's husband had told me that a local nurseryman had told him 'Ya just can't bonsai Australian native plants'. Well, the BNPG had just shown us that you can't believe everything you hear from the nursery.



We gravitated to the Book Sales area, just as we do during the APS Geelong Plant Sale. And as is the norm, after a thorough browse we bought a couple, but this time on insects and butterflies of the garden, and not plants. One had actually been reviewed by Bill and Sue for the September issue of APS Vic's colossal magazine, 'Growing Australian' - *Miniature Lives: Identifying Insects in Your Home and Garden* by Michelle Gleeson, a Queensland entomologist.

And now Di ventured out in the cool, to look at the plants in tubes and pots and join a few others looking for new garden residents. There seemed to be two sellers, one of which was the BNPG itself. It wasn't long before Di was back in the main room - empty handed and slightly disappointed, but fussy.

A check of the watch showed the time was almost 1.00pm - 90 quick minutes. Since we couldn't smell or see food, the decision was made to leave and chase some tucker and hot drinks. Well, there was another little disharmony, and time for another first. Lunch would be in Maryborough, where we'd never been, and it was just a small drive along route C277 from Kangaroo Flat. The drive was up hill and down lovely green dales with full dams. We had no idea what was Maryborough but on arrival, 99% of the place was at the magnificent football ground - must have been a very important finals match. So we had a bit of trouble finding lunch.

But lunch was done. And without any further disharmony we headed back to Waurin Ponds - via Avoca, where we'd never been, Lexton, where we'd never been and that also had a huge footy ground crowd, Ballarat, Mt Mercer, where we'd never been, and Shelford. Driving remained good until we arrived at the large wind farm at Mt Mercer which whipped up a very heavy rainstorm. No wonder there are green paddocks all around!

Home at 5.15pm after what had been a truly great day, all because of a shared interest in growing and propagating Australian plants in home gardens, and membership of an APS group of like-minded people.



HOVERFLIES

By Ade Foster

I was asked to identify an insect while we were at Leach's garden a couple of weeks ago. Sue and Phil thought it might be a native bee, but it was a hoverfly. They have become increasingly noticeable in the past few weeks and are in almost plague proportions in some suburbs around Geelong.



Hoverfly – image Malcolm Tattersall

Hoverflies belong to the family Syrphidae, which includes Drone flies. They are true flies (Order Diptera) and so have just two wings with a pair of oscillating clubs called halteres, rather than two *pairs* of wings, as do bees, wasps and other flying insects. There are 169 species of these little flies world-wide, with many represented in the Australian fauna. Most are brightly coloured and banded with yellow and brown or black stripes, resembling wasps or bees. They are very fast fliers, but have a distinctive ability to hover motionless, giving rise to their common name. The species in great numbers around Geelong at the moment belong to the Genus *Eristalis*.

Hoverflies are harmless to humans, having no sting or bite, but they are very beneficial insects to the gardener. The adults are nectar feeders and are important pollinators of many plants.

The maggot-like larvae take various forms. Those of *Syrphus ssp.* are predatory, and hunt aphids and other soft-bodied sucking plant pests. The larvae of *Microdon spp.* are extraordinary, in that they are found in ants' nests, and when first discovered, were thought to be molluscs, as they closely resemble slugs. However, the majority of species live in damp leaf-litter and rotting vegetation. Our hoverflies lay their eggs in stagnant water, and the larvae breathe through a long tube on their posterior giving them the common, though repulsive, name of 'Rat-tailed Maggots.' Our wet winter and resultant standing water in drains and ditches is the probable cause for their increase in numbers.



Hoverfly larvae feeding on an aphid.

GRAMPIANS – POMONAL WILDFLOWER SHOW, PLANT SALE AND WARTOOK OPEN GARDENS

By Nicole Leach

On the grand final long weekend, Matt and I went up to the Grampians. It was partially for a well-deserved get away, but mainly for the Pomonal Wildflower Show and Plant Sale and to hunt for wildflowers. We arrived on the Friday, set down roots at the Lake

Fyans Caravan Park and set off to the north-eastern end of the Grampians, looking for wildflowers. We did the same last year. Because of the rain that they had been having, it was so different to the year before, which was incredibly dry.



Some of the pea-flowers we found

We even drove by and photographed a pair of Gang Gang Cockatoos, which were hanging off a branch on the side of Mt Zero Road.

There were quite a few of the same species of wildflowers that we saw last year, but there was also an abundance of different flowers out, that had benefitted from the good long drink that they'd been having. There was also water running, no, gushing, along the sides of the roads. There were a couple of points in the weekend where Matt was concerned that his ute would get stuck in a muddy hole somewhere in the middle of nowhere, and we both thought it lucky that we took the 'country car' as opposed to my little i30 for crossing these watery road hazards.



There were waxlip orchids (*Glossida major*) everywhere, from pure whites to deep purples, and huge. The Mountain grevillea (*Grevillea alpina*) were much better looking than last year, as were the Flame grevillea (*Grevillea dimorpha*). Matt commented that

the latter looked like they had some kind of disease last year, which made them kind of blackened and stunted.



***Glossodia major* – Purple Waxlip colour forms**

Saturday morning we made the short trip to the Pomonal Wildflower show and plant sale. Whilst Matt was perusing for plants to purchase, I checked out the lovely preserves on display from Five Ducks Farm. I walked away with some Limequat and passionfruit jelly, wondering what kind of baked goods I was going to pop it into. We went inside the newly open Pomonal hall, which was set up with displays of wildflowers. Most were put into species groups and were well presented to those, like me, who don't have much of an idea about native plants and flowers.



We took our precious load of purchased plants back to Lake Fyans, before checking out some of the orchids and sundews in bloom close by. There were gazillions of spider orchids (*Caladenia* sp), Lady fingers, Pink fingers and Golden moth orchids (*Diurus* sp) near the outlet of the lake. We then took the 'country car' out to the western part of the Grampians, where there weren't as many different types of wildflowers, but certainly some different species to the north eastern part. After finally finding a way out that wasn't closed due to water or fallen

trees, we took a look at Mackenzie Falls. It was pumping! The track down to the bottom of the falls was closed, due to the muddy conditions, but that didn't stop quite a number of people jumping the gate and heading down. We also went up to Reed's Lookout, where we got a wonderful 360° view. On the way back to Lake Fyans, we finally managed to pick up a radio signal, enough to hear the last 10 minutes and the Doggies win the Grand Final.



Mackenzie Falls and Silverband Falls

Sunday morning we packed up and started heading out to Wartook Gardens. We were making great time, so decided to call in for a look at Silverband Falls, they were pumping too! Anyway, we finally ended up at Wartook Gardens. The gardens themselves were very large, well maintained and had lots of beautiful native plants in bloom. The views of Grampians from the gardens were spectacular! We're looking forward to seeing what different wildflowers there will be to photograph out there next year.



Wartook Gardens