



# Correa Mail

Newsletter No 412 - April, 2025

## APRIL MEETING - GENERAL MATTERS

The meeting was chaired by Bruce McGuiness.

The main topic of discussion was the success of the 2025 APS Geelong District Australian Plant Sale. The sale was held on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April from 8.30 am to 4pm at Wirrawilla in Lovely Banks.

The day could not have gone better with perfect sunny skies providing a stunning backdrop for our 9 growers. The growers provided a wonderful selection of high quality plants and we had over 500 people through the gates. Add to this the delicious sausage sizzle provided by the Lions Club of Corio and Norlane and the (much appreciated) coffee van, some beautiful books to peruse at the Bill and Sue's book stall and fun kids activities and a really enjoyable day was had by all. It was extremely gratifying to see people leave with their hands and bags full of beautiful Australian plants.



Our major fundraiser for the year, this year's sale raised over \$1200 for our Club. We are deeply grateful to the growers, coffee van, booksellers and Lions Club who all contribute significantly to the successful outcome of the day (and to you, Weather God).



The success of the day would definitely not be possible without the hard work of a range of APS Geelong volunteers. We extend our sincerest thanks to the following club members:

- Ade Foster – organised the whole event including making sure that we had adequate numbers of quality growers and confirming dates and locations and a range of other logistical matters. This work takes a lot more effort than it might seem and Ade has done an outstanding job – THANK YOU ADE.
- Matt Leach who set up a stunning display table of Australian Plants and manned the stall providing expertise to dozens of enquires all day long
- Bruce McGuinness, Matt Leach, Peter Nuzum, Sheila Deakin, Chris Walter-Cook, Di Royce, Joy Sutton and Pam Baars who worked tirelessly to set up and manage the event on the day and also pack it away in the afternoon.

President: Position Vacant  
Treasurer: Bruce McGuiness/Sheila Deakin  
Australian Plants Society, Geelong - Website: [www.apsgeelong.org](http://www.apsgeelong.org)

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- Nicole Leach who provided fun for the kids all day with free activities.
- Bruce McGuinness who purchased all the food and drink for the growers 'after party' and Tracey Hind who did the food preparation.
- Peter Nuzum who stepped in for Vice President Carmel Addlem in presenting our host Arthur Pape with an appreciation award for many years of hosting the event on behalf of APS Geelong.



**APRIL MEETING**

**PRESENTATION BY  
JOHN LENAGAN**

John Lenagan is a retired architect, now avid conservationist and photographer who has travelled the world studying and photographing insects, spiders and other organisms. John has over 20,000 observations recorded in iNaturalist!

John delivered a fascinating presentation on a critically important subject – insects and ecosystems. We all know that a healthy ecosystem provides an organised system of biodiversity where all the elements within the

system provide the necessary food, shelter and conditions for one another on a complementary basis. In this way the environment and its various life forms (both flora and fauna) thrive and sustain one another over a long period of time. Interruptions to one element of an ecosystem can end up damaging the whole.

John shared his expertise in this field focussing specifically on micro elements of an ecosystem, which are often unobserved by we mere mortals. These micro elements include insects – a species that people too often try to eliminate from our environment with insecticides.

The following words are thanks to Bruce McGuinness who took excellent notes at the meeting in my absence; THANK YOU Bruce. Photos are thanks to John Lenagan. THANK YOU John:

The key message is that the micro elements of ecosystems are important and often unnoticed. Seventy percent of biomass is underground with many animals consequently living underground.

The intricacies of the insect and spider food web was presented using John's amazing photographs. Trophic levels, (the position a group of organisms occupy in a food chain) was illustrated by grouping photographs of insects from various levels together and John telling an interesting story about them. In the end it can be summarised by who eats who!



Lichens, fungi, and slime moulds are some of the pioneers of natural ecosystems with some fungi containing psychogenic attributes causing insects to do weird things when infected by spores like going underground when they are normally airborne which consequently helps the fungus complete its life cycle.



In a healthy ecosystem, herbivores are the primary food source for many other life forms with insects making up a surprisingly large portion of the diet of birds that are sometimes considered to be solely considered plant based. For example, parrots love eating lerps and scale. Natural predators control the population of herbivores with the example of recent soldier beetle and cabbage white butterfly population explosions. An interesting fact of the night was that moths pollinate a lot more plants than butterflies.



Organisms that recycle are essential for the ecosystem, if it wasn't for composters and scavengers we would be overwhelmed by dung, fallen timber and carrion. Jewel Beetles are pollinators and borers that prune old branches helping them to fall. The African savannas would be swamped by dung if wasn't for insects breaking down this waste, dead animals are stripped down to the bone in a very short time by insects. John showed photographs were symbiotic relationships exist between scale insects on our plants and the ants that farm that scale.



The key message of the presentation was to encourage insects in the garden, they are critical to health and diversity of wildlife. Avoid the use of insecticides and be prepared to accept some plant damage if you want to see birds, butterflies, and other insects.

John requested his speaker's fee be donated to the Friends of Eastern Otways. We thank Lyhn Barfield for organising an exceptional speaker.



Photo is of John photographing insects in a jungle location.

#### PLANT TABLE - APRIL

An *Eremophila Cuneata* brought in by Frank Sheelings was chosen as Plant of the Month. A pretty pink flower crowned the unusual wedge shaped leaves of this plant. It isn't very common but does wonderfully in coastal

areas and is a very manageable 1metre plant. Those of us with coastal soils in our gardens could do a lot worse than follow Frank's example. Thanks Frank!



Image Credit: Bruce McGuinness

### 2025 GEELONG GROUP MEETINGS and OUTINGS

The next meeting is on May 20<sup>th</sup> and starts at an earlier time of 7pm. This meeting will be a little bit different. It starts with pizza at 7pm and then moves on to a fun, team based trivia event. Please come and join us; there's no need to be an expert. Your host (Nicole) will ensure there is fun for everyone regardless of your length of membership or level of knowledge. There are prizes and a trophy at stake too!

Please come and join us for the fun and food and remember the earlier start time. For this meeting we request that you give us an RSVP. This is to assist with the pizza ordering to make sure we have enough to go around. If you are attending the May meeting can you please email your attendance up to 12 hours before the meeting to [apsgeelongnews@gmail.com](mailto:apsgeelongnews@gmail.com) letting us know and also let us know if you have any particular dietary requirements for the pizza (eg vegetarian or gluten free requests). We look forward to seeing you and sharing a bite and a laugh and a bit of friendly competition.



Further APS Geelong topics for you to schedule into your busy calendars for later in the year are below:

**Jun 17** - Ian Evans – Brachychitons

**July 15** TBD

**Aug 19** – AGM and Photo Competition

The location is The Ballroom Hamlyn Park, 1 Carey Street Hamlyn Heights. Click [here](#) to see the location on google maps.

### ADDITIONAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND PLANT SALES

In addition to the above activities of our local Geelong District Group, below are some more dates for further activities in 2025 that may be of great interest to many of you:

- May 10** APS Melton Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale. St. Andrews Uniting Church, 18 Gisborne Rd., Bacchus Marsh. 9am – 2pm
- Aug 2/3** 15<sup>th</sup> FJC Rogers Seminar focussed on Epacrids. Hosted by APS Mornington Peninsula. Registration at [apsvic.org.au/fjc-rogers-seminar-2025](https://apsvic.org.au/fjc-rogers-seminar-2025).
- Aug 16-24** Banksia Week Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne. Sales, exhibitions, walks.
- Sept 1** National Wattle Day. Details TBC.
- Sept 6** APS Mitchell Flower Show and Sale. Wallan Community Centre.
- Sept 13/14** APS Yarra Yarra Plant Expo. Eltham Community & Reception Centre, 801 Main Rd., Eltham. 10am – 3pm.
- Sept 20/21** Angair Wildflower & Arts Weekend. Anglesea Memorial Hall. 10am – 4pm

### RESULTS OF THE MEMBER SURVEY

We recently sought your thoughts and opinions via an anonymous online survey to see if APS Geelong is meeting your needs and to hear if there is anything we can do differently or better to improve the APS Geelong membership experience.

The survey sought your views on a number of aspects of APS Geelong including meetings, events, speakers, newsletters and so forth.

We were delighted with the response from members which was well over 50%. For comparison, the average



survey response rate is around 32% and the survey tool tells us that a response rate of over 50% should be considered “an excellent result”.



So THANK YOU APS Geelong Members for so generously sharing your thoughts and ideas with us. The high level or “headline” outcomes of the survey were as follow:

- Fewer than 50% of respondents attend meetings regularly
- Everyone joins APS to learn more about Australian Plants but only 20% join to share their knowledge
- Many members don't feel confident in their knowledge and this is an impediment to them participating in meetings and events as they don't feel they have much to contribute. Some people also didn't feel welcomed at meetings.
- Just over half our members feel that their APS Geelong membership is delivering most of what they are looking for in terms of their reasons for joining.
- Most members are keen for APS Geelong to do a lot more and there were some excellent suggestions from members as to how to go about doing this.

In terms of ‘touching base’ with our membership and listening to their needs, the survey proved itself to be very valuable. There are clearly some concerns out there and it is fantastic that people took the time to share them.

The committee are yet to have the opportunity to review and discuss the results in detail, or to look at the many ideas and suggestions that the members provided in the survey. Once this has happened your specific suggestions and the committee's response to them will be shared. There may also be a further callout for interest in specific areas to see if sufficient numbers of people are interested in doing some of the additional

activities suggested by members in the survey. In short, stay tuned!

#### FROM APS HQ

APS Geelong District Group is a member of [APS Victoria](#). And at the 2024 biennial Australian Native Plants Society (ANSPA) Conference, APS Vic took over the executive roles of ANSPA. That means that your membership of APS Geelong is part of a much bigger picture of growing and propagating Australian plants as well as helping to preserve our native plants through initiatives such as monitoring and lobbying and seed management. You're part of something that really matters!

#### ANSPA STUDY GROUPS – available to APS Vic Members

One of the unique benefits of being an APS Victoria member is the ability to join an Australian Native Plant Society (ANSPA) Study Group. Study Groups look at particular types of plants or activities and contribute in practical ways to the body of knowledge about them.

Each study group has a leader and usually has both active members who participate in the studies and passive members who receive the information and group newsletters but are not active in the study itself. Some study groups have meetings, but others don't. And some have field trips or excursions. Study Groups can be a wonderful way to improve your knowledge in specific areas.

The following Study Groups are currently open to APS Geelong District members who are also APS Vic Members:

- Acacia Study Group
- Banksia Study Group
- Correa Study Group
- Dryandra Study Group
- Eremophila Study Group
- Eucalyptus Study Group
- Fern Study Group
- Container Plants Study Group
- Grafting Study Group
- Food Plants Study Group
- Pea Flower Study Group
- Garden Design Study Group
- Goodeniaceae Study Group
- Grevillea Study Group
- Hakea Study Group

- Isopogon and Petrophile Study Group
- Wallum and Coastal Heathland Study Group

Join via the [APS Vic web page](#). You will need to be an APS Vic member to join.

### SEE/HEAR ANYTHING INTERESTING?

This newsletter is put together by volunteers. Do you have anything interesting to share? Let us know. It could be in the fields of any of the following:

- Native gardening
- Local conservation
- Australian Biodiversity
- Local pests/weeds
- Council or community initiatives
- Academic research or conferences
- Photos of your native garden or wildlife in your local area
- Gardening tips
- Species information that others might find useful
- Nurseries you've come across with great quality native products or really good price tags!

...anything really that you think your like-minded APS Geelong District Group members might enjoy reading or hearing about.

Send any contributions to the newsletter editor at [apsgeelongnews@gmail.com](mailto:apsgeelongnews@gmail.com)

### GARDENING THOUGHT FOR APRIL

I'm sure almost everyone felt like this on ANZAC Day 😊

