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NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY, MITCHELL GROUP INC.

aps.mitchell@gmail.com

PO Box 541, Kilmore, Victoria 3764

Inc# A0054306V

March 2016

Volume 3, Issue 2

March news...!

Hello and welcome to our March 2016 Newsletter.

First up I would like to extend a big thank you to every one who came along and contributed to last month's meeting (the first in our new venue). Not only are thanks due to everyone who helps with set up, pack up, organising and running the meeting, plant sales and our guest speaker but thanks are also due the members and visitors who take the time to come out and make all the effort worthwhile. In addition last month, members provided some very welcome and valuable ideas and feedback which the committee will be working on. With that in mind further opportunity for discussion and feedback will form part of our upcoming meeting. Do come along to our March meeting for what will be another very interesting guest speaker presentation (further details page on page 2) and what we hope will be more discussion that will help to make 2016 a vibrant and enjoyable year for our group.

Our next newsletter is due out on April 11th. All contributions both large and small are very,



Photo: From Bill & Bee Barker

The first flower on our approximately 10 year old prostrate *Banksia serrata*. It was originally in the ground but almost died so we put it in a pot. It has been growing like weed since and it has finally got around to flowering. This is the first of about 6

very welcome and should be sent in by Monday April 4th. Email contributions to: wattlelum@southernphone.com.au or post to PO Box 381 Pyalong Vic 3521.

Happy gardening & cheers,

Jeanine :-)

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Garden Visit Invitation...

By Mike Williams

APS Yarra Yarra would like to extend our invitation to the APS Mitchell members to our garden visits.

The next garden is of Carmen and Robert Cooper:

3 Meldrum Ave Mill Park

Date: Sunday 3rd of April 2pm

We have a light afternoon tea and members are asked to bring a small plate to share.

Regards,
Mike

Mitchell Diary Dates..

- **MARCH 21st 7:30pm MEETING**
Guest Speaker: Cassandra Twomey "Iramoo"
NOTE NEW VENUE: OWNERS & TRAINERS BAR KILMORE RACING CLUB, EAST STREET, KILMORE VIC 3764
- **SUNDAY APRIL 3rd 2:00pm APS Yarra Yarra Garden Visit**
Invitation: To the Garden of Carmen & Robert Cooper:
3 Meldrum Avenue Mill Park (Bring a small plate of food to share)
- **APRIL APS MITCHELL MEETING/EXCURSION**
Date/Time/Venue To Be Advised.
- **MAY 16th 7:30pm MEETING**
Guest Speaker: To Be Advised.
- **SATURDAY AUGUST 27th 10:30am EXCURSION MEETING:**
APS MITCHELL WILL BE JOINING APS STRATHBOGIE RANGES GROUP AT EUROPA for a Guest Speaker Presentation by Leon Costermans
Venue To Be Advised
- **OCTOBER 15th APS MITCHELL ANNUAL SPRING PLANT EXPO & SALE**



Standard of the Month, March...

By Brian Weir

Grevillea Pick 'O' the Crop

If my memory is correct the first seedlings of this beauty germinated on Neil & Wendy Marriott's property at Stawell immediately after the New Year's Day bushfires of 2006 which destroyed much of the grevillea living collection. The best of the seedlings was selected, hence the name and out of traumatic times this great plant made it's debut.

G. bipinnatifida x *G. thyrsoides* are the parents and as a low graft shrub it will grow to approximately 0.8m high x 1.5m wide. Me and a couple of dozen honey eaters strongly recommend this plant which is worthy of a spot in all gardens.

Grevillea Pick 'O' the Crop
Photo: Brian Weir



MEETINGS ARE HELD ON THE
3rd MONDAY OF THE MONTH
(February to November)
unless otherwise advised

Commencing 7:30 pm in the
Owners & Trainers Bar
Kilmore Racing Club,
East Street, Kilmore Vic 3764

Entry \$2.00 Gold Coin

Guest Speaker

Door Prizes

Plant Sales

Fertilizer Sales

(APS Mitchell Slow Release
fertiliser \$5.00 per 500g)

Use of the APS Mitchell free
Library (See Barbara)

Supper & Chat

VISITORS VERY WELCOME

Members & Visitors are
encouraged to bring along
exhibits for our Flower

Specimen Table

Please label plants



March Meeting Monday the 21st 7:30pm...

By Jeanine Petts & Cassandra Twomey

The guest speaker for this month's meeting will be Cassandra Twomey giving a presentation on "Iramoo". Cassandra is the current Nursery and Volunteer Co-ordinator at Iramoo Grassland Centre & Nursery (based at Victoria University in St Albans) and runs the small nursery which propagates remnant indigenous plants, as well as a seed orchard. The centre was originally established 20 years ago by a group of academics, students & volunteers to study, save and rehabilitate endangered Volcanic Plains Grasslands and the increasing threatened flora - and more specifically the Cairnlea Grassland that was earmarked for housing, but which contains a large population of Legless Lizards. Currently under development is a Bush Food garden to showcase the original flora of the Western Plains, and share the knowledge of how these amazing plants were traditionally used.

For those of you interested in grasslands, local flora, seed collection and bush foods this is a topic not to be missed.



Roadside wildflowers,
Lancefield-Pyalong Rd
November 2010
Photo: Jeanine Petts

Memberships...

For membership/renewal enquiries or forms please contact Bill Barker-
Phone: 5783 3838 (or see Bill at a monthly meeting)

Alternatively visit APS Mitchell's website:

http://www.apsmitchell.org.au/?page_id=18

March Meeting Report...

By Jeanine Petts

A “great turnout” of members, a couple of visitors and our guest speaker were welcomed by Ian Julian on what was a lovely summer evening for our first meeting of the year held at our new venue. As we didn't have a nomination for the role of APS Mitchell President for this year Ian announced he will step up to the role and Barbara Mau likewise announced taking on the role of Vice President for 2016.

Attendees were also provided with a little treat as Brian Weir brought along seeds to share of *Grevillea eriobotrya* – a rare endangered species from Western Australia (East of the Darling Ranges). I'm not sure if all the seeds found new homes so if anyone is interested in growing this species it would be worthwhile to check with Brian. Victoria Morris also reported that the APS Keilor Plains weekend alpine trip to Mt Baw Baw (January 22nd -23rd) had been well worth attending and highly recommended a visit to the region.

The floor was then given over to Anne Langmaid who commenced her presentation:

“Confessions of ‘Anne’ Eremophilaphile”...

Anne began with apologising for leaving all the cuttings intended for the evening's presentation on the kitchen table but did have a beautiful colour wheel to show us. The colour wheel was a wreath made from plants flowering in her garden on June 21st 2014 which had been photographed then printed onto canvas and was a striking example of both the range of colours in native flowering plants and what can be achieved with a little simple creative photography.

For Anne and *Eremophila* it wasn't actually love at first sight, although Anne has been a member of APS Keilor Plains group for 23 years it wasn't until 18 years ago that the first *Eremophila* was planted in her garden which is on dry soil, in a bend on a windy ridge. *Eremophila* AKA “Emu Bushes” are endemic to Australia and members of the Myoporaceae family, Myoporaceae also extend up into New Guinea and the Islands.

The flowers of *Eremophila* are described as having:

- Calyx divided into 5 lobes
- 5 petalled tubular flowers with 2 lobes which are large and curled back.

Flower colours come in the “entire rainbow” and buds can (in some species) start one colour and age to a different colour.

Eremophila fall into two main types: Insect pollinated (81% of species) and mostly bird pollinated (19% of Species).

Insect pollinated species are identified by:

- Flowers with 3 lower petals & 2 upper petals.
- Stamens within the flower.

These are mostly pollinated by bees, wasps and ants etc. Flowers are also usually wider (with a landing area), colours in the UV range (Blue, White, Purple) and have short stamens.

Mostly bird pollinated species are identified with:

- Flowers with 1 petal as a lip and remaining petals fused.
E.g. *Eremophila maculata* and *Eremophila glabra*.

These bird attracting flowers are long and tubular with protruding stamens, are found in brighter colours of red, brown, yellow, green and are loved by bees as well.

Eremophila are native to arid to semi-arid regions and mostly found in Western Australia. Their natural habitat falls within a 200-400mm rainfall range with long dry spells and few downpours and are found on stony, dry, nutrient poor soils.



Anne Langmaid's Colour Wheel
Photo: Jeanine Petts

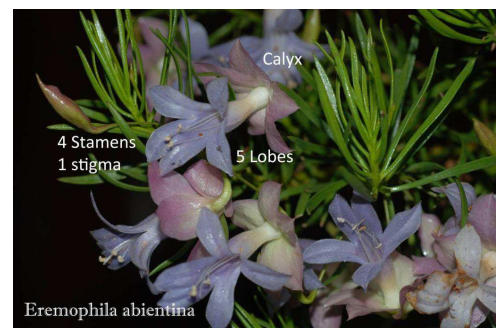


Photo: Anne Langmaid



Examples of an insect pollinated flower (left) and a mostly bird pollinated flower (right). Photos: Anne Langmaid

(Continued on page 4)

March Meeting Report...

By Jeanine Petts

(Continued from page 3)

One desert adaptation is grey leaves. *Eremophila mirabilis* and *E. subfloccosa* are just two of the grey leaved species. Hairy leaved *Eremophila* species resent humid conditions and benefit from being planted in an airy area and pruned to be open. *Eremophila* must have full sun to part shade to flower well and on 42c days will just smile at the sun. New plants should only be watered in their first year and some only water in at planting then leave - More plants die from over-watering than anything else. Pinching back new growth can also be of benefit.

Plant size can vary dramatically across the species with a couple growing to trees. Shrub sizes range from small right through to large such as *Eremophila* 'Big Polly' (*Eremophila bignoniiflora* x *E. polyclada*). Propagation is mostly done from cutting as few grow from seed. It was generally believed that seed needed to pass through the gut of birds (Emus, hence the common name) to break down the thick seed capsule around the seed and break dormancy. More recent findings indicate a chemical dormancy and if attempting to propagate from seed, using old seed is recommended. *Eremophila* can and do hybridise within sub-groups, *Eremophila* 'Beryl's Lipstick' (from Russell Wait's garden) is one example of a natural hybrid cross.

Most cuttings grow easily although care with humidity is needed for grey-leaved species and a 50% shade house recommended. Some species are hard to grow from cutting and this is where grafting is advised as it allows more species to survive in wetter climates. *Myoporum insulare* is generally the preferred rootstock.

A few good reasons to grow *Eremophila*:

- Flowers profusely
- Most are small to medium shrubs
- Heat and drought tolerant
- Attracts birds

A couple with interesting foliage (little or no leaves) are *Eremophila gibbifolia* and *E. dempsteri*.

Some of Anne's favourite *Eremophila* are:

Eremophila subteretifolia - Best ground cover.

***Eremophila glabra* 'Kalbarri's Carpet'** - Ground cover.

Eremophila debilis - Holds pretty pink fruit for 6 months and has odd looking small flowers.

***Eremophila* 'Yana Road'** - Is a *E. gilesii* x *E. latrobei*

Natural hybrid and personal favourite. It is an open shrub growing 1m x 1m which flowers at ends of branches.

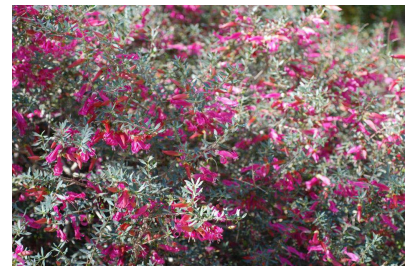
Eremophila granitica - Always in flower but is best to use a grafted plant when grown in clay. It is part shade and frost tolerant.

Eremophila oppositifolia - Has dense flowering in spring which lasts 6-8 weeks with sepals which remain on the plant providing long lasting colour and comes in several colour forms including *subsp. rubra* from SA which has alternate leaves.

Eremophila calorhabdos - Upright shrub, needs tip pruning.



Eremophila subfloccosa (left) & *Eremophila mirabilis* (right)
Photos: Anne Langmaid



Eremophila 'Beryl's Lipstick' Photo:
Anne Langmaid



Eremophila gibbifolia (left) & *Eremophila dempsteri* (right)
Photos: Anne Langmaid



Eremophila debilis Photo: Anne Langmaid
(Continued on page 5)

March Meeting Report...

By Jeanine Petts

(Continued from page 4)

Eremophila muelleriana - Dark-Black buds. Needs to be grafted- preferably on *Myoporum montanum* or something vigorous in your local conditions.

Eremophila nivea - Purple flowered and even lovely when not in flower. Can be unstable and not long lived (lasting around 7 years). A white form is also available.

Eremophila glandulifera - A well shaped shrub to around 1m and is "Just Gorgeous".

Eremophila lachnocalyx - Has profuse flowers and interesting hairy calyx's give the impression of dew.

Eremophila platycalyx - Quite a tall shrub growing to 2.5m which makes a good windbreak. *subsp. pardalota* has spotted flowers.

Eremophila glabra - Comes in many forms of which around half have hairless green leaves and the remaining half are grey hairy leaved.

Eremophila aureivisca - An "absolute favourite". A 1m rounded shrub with bright green wispy foliage. Profuse flowers late winter to early spring with calyx's that age to burgundy. Tolerates a wide range of conditions excepting frost.

Eremophila abientina - An extremely pretty shrub growing to 2m which is lovely but develops tar on the leaves which is collected by bees and used to repair hives. Tar on the leaves also makes it harder to take cuttings.

Eremophila metallicorum - Grows to 1-1.5 m and has pretty calyx's. A specimen at the Melton Botanic Garden is currently around knee high.

Eremophila brevifolia - Not a showy plant but is a sweet crisp green with white flowers.

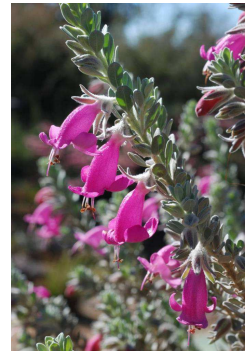
Eremophila microtheca - Has a strong odour not liked by some people.

Eremophila denticulata - Comes in two forms, one with toothed leaves.

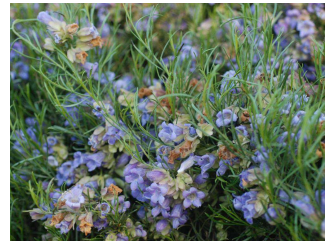
Eremophila bowmanii - A lovely rounded shrub growing to .75m high with purple flowers, grey foliage which flowers all through spring and grows easily from cuttings.



Eremophila muelleriana
Photo: Anne Langmaid



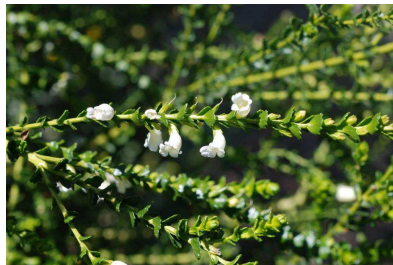
Eremophila glandulifera
Photo: Anne Langmaid



Eremophila aureivisca
Photo: Anne Langmaid



Eremophila glabra
Photo: Anne Langmaid



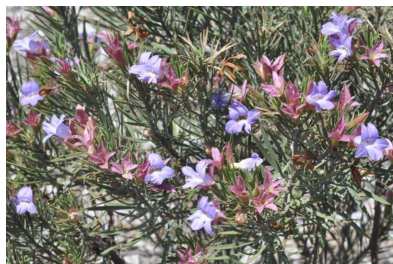
Eremophila brevifolia
Photo: Anne Langmaid



Eremophila oppositifolia
Photo: Anne Langmaid



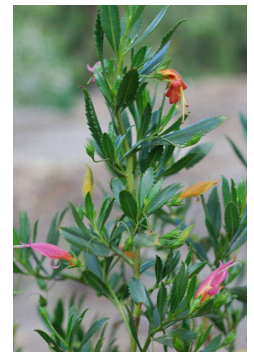
Eremophila platycalyx subsp. pardalota
Photo: Anne Langmaid



Eremophila metallicorum
Photo: Anne Langmaid



Eremophila lachnocalyx
Photo: Anne Langmaid



Eremophila denticulata
Photo: Anne Langmaid

(Continued on page 6)

March Meeting Report...

By Jeanine Petts

(Continued from page 5)

A great deal of work continues to be done at the Melton Botanic Garden Arboretum which is run by volunteers and some assistance from "Work for the Dole" participants. Around 70 species of *Eremophila* are growing there, also 90 species of Dryland Eucalypts. There are 15 new garden beds including a SA Coastal Bed which is mulched with 100mm of sand. Among the other garden beds are the Avon Bed (also mulched with sand and dedicated to plants from the Avon area), a South African Garden, a Volcanic Plains Garden (near the lake) and a Koorie Student Garden.



Melton Botanic Gardens - Avon Garden
Photo: Anne Langmaid



Melton Botanic Gardens
Photo: Anne Langmaid



Melton Botanic Gardens
Volcanic Plains Garden
Photo: Anne Langmaid

Some recommended reading on *Eremophila* is:

- The weighty (2kg) volume: *Eremophila and allied genera* by R.J Chinnock for the "adamant scientific" reader.
- *Australia's Eremophilas - changing gardens for a changing climate* by Norma Boschen, Maree Goods & Russell Wait.
- *A Field Guide to the Eremophilas of Western Australia* by Andrew Brown and Beven Buirchell. (A copy is in the APS Mitchell Library – contact Bill Barker to borrow).
- *Eremophilas For The Garden* by S.G.A.P SA Region (out of print).

Eremophila can be purchased at various APS Group plant sales, from Russell Wait and the Nursery at Melton Botanic Gardens (open Tuesdays 10am-1pm, 2nd and 4th Sundays 10am-noon. 21 Williams St, Melton). In closing Anne extended a Saturday "Field Trip" invitation to our group to the Melton Gardens during which the Nursery could be opened for us (by prior arrangement).

For further information on the Melton Botanic Gardens visit the Friends of the Melton Botanic Gardens web page:

<http://www.fmbg.org.au/>

Following Anne's talk Ian invited discussion and suggestions from members asking: What do we want to do (as a group)/Have for guest speakers during 2016? Suggestions were:

Native Food Plants – Growing/uses/cooking

Grasses

"In depth on genera"

Grassland

Combined outings

Pruning

Tree Care/Habitat pruning

Additional suggestions are most welcome can be made at any meeting or by contacting a committee member.

Garden Guide- What's to do in March...

By Barbara Mau

This summer has been too hot and dry for comfort. I'm sure you would agree, and now, suddenly, as I write, the rain has finally started!

Watching my 'no water' garden slowly wither to shades of brown during the month of February I decided to intervene. Carting several 1000 litre tanks of bore water up for the garden saved the day.

The addition of water had the desired effect and many of the smaller flowering plants, *Brachyscome multifida*, Cut-Leaf Daisy, *Coronidium scorpioides*, Button Everlastings, *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, Common Everlastings, *Goodenia gracilis*, Slender Goodenia, and *Wahlenbergia communis*, Tufted Bluebell, and many others have stayed to produce (although not in abundance) their beautiful flowers. In addition I was doubly rewarded by the ongoing visits of native bees and butterflies.

The Blue-Banded Bee, *Amegilla murrayensis* (pictured) is a constant visitor, collecting nectar from potted *Campanulas* by my kitchen door. On still and sunny days she can be seen collecting pollen from my patch of endangered *Dianella amoena*. This beautiful bee is solitary and after mating will build her solitary nest in shallow clay soil, often in the same spot, and close to other blue-banded bees. Some flowers

hide their pollen inside tiny capsules eg. *Hibbertia* spp, *Senna artemisioides* and *Dianella amoena*. The Blue-Banded Bee is capable of a special type of pollination behaviour called 'buzz pollination' in order to extract pollen from these flowers. There is a wonderful web site, Science News <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-12-15/australian-blue-banded-bee-is-a-head-banger/7019074> where scientists have captured the unique pollination technique in a slow motion video. The Blue-Banded Bee is capable of head butting the reluctant flower's anthers, at a speed of 350 butts per second, to release the pollen! As she collects pollen for her nest, she transfers some of the pollen and successfully pollinates the flowers. Interestingly these bees have a preference for blue, mauve and purple flowers, but happily gather their pollen from white or yellow flowers too.

This autumn I have decided to look for a sunny, sheltered spot in my garden and build a bee house. I have found a few promising 'Bee Hotels' web sites that may be of interest should you too wish to construct some accommodation for these beautiful and fascinating little creatures. <http://www.sgaonline.org.au/insect-hotels/>
<http://www.littleecofootprints.com/20>

[14/05/how-to-build-a-native-solitary-bee-hotel.html](http://www.apsmitchell.org.au/14/05/how-to-build-a-native-solitary-bee-hotel.html)

I am also attaching a rather interesting Bee Wall and Habitat PDF that I found and thought you may enjoy it too. (Attached with newsletter email 14/3/2016 & uploaded at www.apsmitchell.org.au)



Dianella amoena
Photo: J. Petts



Amegilla murrayensis - Blue-Banded Bee
Photo: Barbara Mau

Reminders, APS Victoria Diary Dates & Other Events

Thank you

- For the various contributions of articles, answering pesky questions, event information, photo's, feedback, proof-reading, researching & providing other information as needed and general support...

A BIG THANK YOU TO:

Bill & Bee Barker,
Neil Humphreys,
Ian Julian,
Anne Langmaid,
Barbara Mau,
Maureen Runge,
Cassandra Twomey,
Lorraine & Brian Weir,
Mike Williams .

APS VIC DIARY DATES...

March 16-20 - Melbourne International Flower & Garden Show participation with RHSV Carlton Gardens.

April 9 & 10 - APS Geelong Plants Sale. 'Wirrawilla', 40 Lovely Banks Rd (formerly Purnell Rd), Lovely Banks. Melways: 431D6 . Off street parking, entry \$2 per Adult or \$5 per car, children free.

April 16 - APS Victoria District Group Conference, Whitehorse Centre, Nunawading.

APRIL 23 - APS Mornington Peninsula Plant Sale. Seawinds, Arthurs Seat State Park. 10 am - 3:30 pm.

May 1 - APS Yarra Yarra Autumn Plant Sale & Propagation Demonstrations. Corner Brougham St & Main Rd, Eltham. Melways 21J7 10 am - 3 pm.

May (date to be advised) - APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Plant Sale, 9 am - 1 pm, Uniting Church Car Park, Bacchus Marsh. Sale features Genus *Hakea* with a large number of unusual species. A full list is available approximately one month prior to sale. Pre-orders can be sent to the secretary: apsmeltonbacchus@gmail.com

September 3 - APS Wilson Park Plant Sale. Wilson

Botanic Park, Princes Hwy, Berwick. 9 am - 4 pm.

September 3 & 4 - Bendigo Native Plants Group Flower Show. Rotary Gateway Park 26 High St, Kangaroo Flat.

September 10 & 11 - APS Yarra Yarra Native Plants Expo. Venue to be advised. 10 am - 4 pm both days.

October 1 & 2 - APS Grampians Group Pomonal Native Flower Show. Pomonal Hall. 9:30 am - 5 pm

October 8-9 2016 - FJC Rogers Seminar in Hamilton "Native Terrestrial and Epiphytic Orchids".



Committee & Contact Information

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Contributions should be sent to Jeanine Petts

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Post: PO Box 381, Pyalong Vic 3521

For inclusion in the next Newsletter please forward contributions prior to the first Monday of each month.

Query Corner...

Maureen has sent in a lovely photo from her garden of a *Leucadendron* species. *Leucadendron* are South African members of the Proteaceae family.

