



Dillwynia sericea

NEWSLETTER

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY, MITCHELL GROUP INC.

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Inc# A0054306V

April news...!

Hello and welcome to our April Newsletter.

Serendipity has played a part in this edition and thanks to our generous contributors you'll find some images to delight the eye which coincidentally happen to have a birds and bees theme scattered through this issue.

As advised in our March Newsletter an open discussion regarding our new meeting venue has taken place (see the March Meeting Report page 5 for details) and the committee would like to encourage as many members as possible to come along to our next meeting and have your say.

Our next newsletter is due out on May 9th. All contributions both large and small are very, very welcome and should be sent in by Monday May 2nd. Email contributions to: wattlegum@southernphone.com.au or post to PO Box 381 Pyalong Vic 3521.

Happy gardening & cheers, Jeanine :-)



Above: From Maureen Runge: "This Kookaburra had just eaten a small snake. We were able to stand one foot away and watch. He was soooooo full"



Right: From Brian Weir : "If you want to attract bees to your garden for at least 1 month of the year as well as have a great, absolutely gorgeous shrub, get this fella: *Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty'."

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Free to a good home ...

Brian has several hundred donated pots that he would rather pass on than send to landfill.

If you can help re-home these orphans please call Brian on:

0427 323 511



April 2016

Volume 3, Issue 3

Mitchell Diary Dates..

- **MONDAY APRIL 18th 7:30pm MEETING at OWNERS & TRAINERS BAR, KILMORE RACING CLUB, EAST STREET, KILMORE VIC 3764**
Informal Propagation Evening. Come along & share your hints & tips.
- **MONDAY 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 EUROA for a Guest Speaker Presentation by Leon Costermans Venue To Be Advised**
- **MONDAY SEPT 16th 7:30pm MEETING**
Guest Speaker: To Be Advised.
- **SATURDAY OCT 15th APS MITCHELL ANNUAL SPRING PLANT EXPO & SALE**
- **MONDAY OCT 17th 7:30pm MEETING**
Guest Speaker: To Be Advised.



Standard of the Month (Millennium), April...

By Brian Weir

Grevillea dryandroides subsp. *hirsuta*

This is yet another magnificent Western Australian *Grevillea* which is found about 200km North East of Perth. It is very rare and extremely endangered in the wild and guess what, it is not prickly.

It tolerates 40c days through summer and frosts to at least -5c, is rarely without flowers and a constant source of food for the honey eaters which seem to enjoy swinging on the long leafless stemmed flowers. *G. dryandroides* does best grafted in the Eastern states and if grafted onto *G. robusta* an interstock is required. It makes a head turning feature plant.

Grevillea dryandroides subsp. *hirsuta*

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



April Meeting Monday the 18th 7:30pm...

By Jeanine Petts

For our April meeting we will be holding an informal hands on propagation evening.

Barbara Mau has kindly agreed to present a short demonstration on seed propagation techniques that have worked for her. The remainder of the evening will be open for members to share any ideas, hints, tips and information in relation to propagating.

Feel free to bring along seed and or cutting material to share.

Remember members, visitors and guests are always encouraged to bring along exhibits for our Flower Specimen Table. If possible please label your specimens.

Also on the agenda for the evening is further discussion regarding our meeting venue and a members vote. The committee would love to have as many members contribute as possible so please come along and share your thoughts.



Brunonia australis

Roadside wildflowers 19.11.2010

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

APS Melton
& Bacchus
Marsh Inc.



**NATIVE PLANT
SALE**

at St Andrew's Uniting
Church, Bacchus Marsh
(MEL333 J6)

Saturday 7th May 2016
9am-1pm

**FEATURING HAKEAS,
dwarf EUCALYPTS
EREMOPHILAS, ORCHIDS**

Info: Barb / David 5428 9369,
or
apsmeltonbacchus@gmail.com

March Meeting Report...

By Jeanine Petts

Lower than usual numbers of members made for a quiet night with an intimate feel for our March meeting. Janis reported attending the recent Glider Symposium which highlighted the Glideways Projects and included the official launch of the Central Victorian Biolinks Initiative. Glideways & the Biolinks Initiative cover the east coast of Australia and are working towards sharing expert knowledge and practical experience to build capacity for increased glider conservation in Central Victoria among other projects. For anyone interested in community connected conservation or what you can do to help conserve Gliders and their habitat information on the Glideways Program can be found at <http://www.glideways.org.au/> and the Central Victorian Biolinks Alliance website is also worth taking a look at: <https://www.centralvicbiolinks.org.au/>

To begin the evening's presentation Cassy Twomey shared a little personal and background information... Among the many hats Cassy wears she is also a member of APS Keilor Plains Group, as is Bill Barker our APS Mitchell Treasurer and it turns out Cassy first met "this noisy American" through the Friends of Taylor's Creek. The Friends of Taylor's Creek was a small team that met back in pre OH&S days to carry out land care works such as cutting out Box Thorn etc. In those days you could hold working bees doing all sorts of works including stopping to light a fire and 'boil the billy' for tea-breaks without the worry of all the OH&S issues and requirements we now face today. It was in this setting that Cassy realised maybe she could make a career out of native plants and began attending a range of different Greening Australia workshops including some on seed collection. This led to going home one day and telling her husband "when I grow up I want to be a seed collector". One thing led to another and before long Cassy went to Ian Taylor (at Western Plains Flora) successfully requesting a job, then spending 10 years working for Ian. The first 7 years were spent working in production before moving into seed collection, the seed bank and spending time out in the field collecting around places such as Gisborne, Werribee, Whittlesea and Wallan. Cassy was responsible for introducing using GPS to the seed collecting but still wished it were possible to download Ian's brain with all his amazingly detailed information on where, how and when to find collecting sites including the understandably secret surviving pockets of rare and endangered plants.

After moving on from Western Plains Flora Cassy has been the Nursery & Volunteer Coordinator at Iramoo Grassland Centre & Nursery for the past 7 years. Iramoo is the Woiwurung word for Grassland and the centre is based at Victoria University in St Albans. The adjacent Iramoo Wildlife Park has been kept undeveloped following a group forming 25 years ago which negotiated with council to protect this important grassland habitat along with its remnant flora and resident fauna. The grassland may be on what is or was considered "rubbish land" scattered with bluestone outcropping but it is a significant habitat for the Striped Legless Lizard and other threatened species.

Melbourne Water has also played an important part in the reserve by developing the wetland area in part of the 38 hectare site. A series of 5 lakes form part of a wetland drainage system with Jones Creek and are a hidden asset in the Cairnlea Grassland which is full of birds and home to Swans, Pelicans, Ducks and many other species. The wetland, lakes and wildlife can be enjoyed by visitors on the various walking tracks through the reserve. The Iramoo Grassland Centre & Nursery currently covers a 2-3 acre site which was once tarmac. 5-6 old portables form the nucleus of buildings which are used to run:

- School excursions 2-3 times a week.
- A field station operating sustainability workshops on biodiversity, drainage etc. and research for the university.
- A nursery which supplies plants to council and for regeneration works etc.

The centre operates on very limited funding with Cassy only employed 2 days per week and volunteer labour which includes Work for the Dole participants and others.

Among the species list for the reserve is Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*), *Danthonia* species (Wallaby grasses) and many small grassland plants such as *Podolepis* and Billy Buttons (*Craspedia*). An ongoing battle with the invasive weed species Serrated Tussock is managed with controlled burns. Frogs are also among the local fauna and the previously mentioned Striped Legless Lizards have been the subject of a 20 year long study by Dr Megan O'Shea. These fascinating endangered lizards grow to 30cm long and have stripes along their bodies. Dr O'Shea does an annual count of the lizards at the end of each summer using terracotta tiles laid out in a grid pattern which are then covered by a box. Other species including Whip Snakes often make use the tiles for shelter and Dr O'Shea also records any other species found as part of the survey.



Podolepis jaceoides

Photo: Courtesy of
Cassandra Twomey
(Iramoo Nursery-Bush
foods for gardens)

(Continued on page 4)

March Meeting Report...

By Jeanine Petts

(Continued from page 3)

The scale pattern on the head of a Striped Legless Lizard is as individual as a fingerprint and Dr O'Shea has become known as "the Lizard Lady" noted for creating the study database which numbers and tracks of all the individual lizards found. It being well known these lizards are found in the region has both advantages and disadvantages as it allows for research and study but as these cute lizards are also worth quite a lot on the black market they are also at risk of being poached. Legless Lizards can at first glance appear snake like but they have ears, a lizard tongue (not forked), make a clicking noise and burrow under tussocks in winter to keep warm. Another interesting characteristic that unfortunately makes them vulnerable is that they will also climb *Themeda triandra* plants and dangle off the seed heads in an alternate strategy to keep warm.

The whole precinct around Iramoo is used as a seed bank of noted provenances for conservation. Over the years funding for the centre (and Cassy's employment) has shifted back and forwards between different education faculties, department and programs. At one point funding ceased for a time but Cassy persevered and kept turning up to work until the Indigenous Education Department took over enabling the current brief to educate on traditional uses. The centre now has a display garden of indigenous bush foods and plant uses and runs a playgroup for indigenous children.

As the centre is run on a very limited budget often things are cobbled together and materials are scavenged from hard rubbish collection etc. A work force partnership with Corrections Victoria also provides much needed labour – some skilled such as plumbers and stonemasons and some not so skilled but all participants have been really keen workers and when working come along with a supervisor. The relationship with Corrections Victoria has been reciprocal and beneficial to both sides with Cassy also visiting remand facilities in a teaching capacity to run an education program in return.

Seed collection season is November, February through March. Collected seed is dried, cleaned then sown in trays using a seed raising mix made up of sieved potting mix, with coconut fibre and vermiculite added. Seed of the Daisy family is sown on the surface of the mix and then covered with vermiculite. Care should be taken with the dust from vermiculite and Cassy recommends using a dust mask or doing this task outside. Don't forget to label seed trays and most things should come up in around a week. Cassy has "played around" with smoked water but also has success without it. The nursery uses overhead misting spray but anyone propagating at home can use a clear plastic tub with a lid with success, just remember to place the tub in a well lit area but out of full sun. Seedlings are pricked out and transplanted at the second leaf stage when around 1cm high then grown on in tubes kept in poly boxes. The poly boxes act as good insulators and will hold 54 tubes in each box. All the plants at the nursery are seed grown except for *Correa* and some Salt Bush species.

It's notable that a majority of Western Plains (Basalt Plains) wildflowers are yellow in colour for example Daisies like *Microseris lanceolata* (Yam Daisy) and *Podolepis* with blue flowered plants being the next predominant colour e.g. *Dianella* and *Wahlenbergia*.

Yam Daisies were a main food source and actually farmed as crop by the local aboriginal people. The women terraced land and collected seed was spread wherever they went. They were also careful to never take a "mother plant" and always left some flowers or seeds on remaining plants. Yam Daisy roots are said to have a nutty taste and were roasted and ground. Sadly the Yam Daisy was mostly eaten out by sheep and became a threatened species as early as the 1880's.

The dedicated seed orchard at Iramoo is located just outside the main gate and is protected from grazers by a rabbit proof fence. Single species box beds include plants such as *Themeda tirandra*, Wallaby Grasses, *Dianella amoena* and the Bulbine Lily - which has a turnip like root system and is a prolific seeder in places like gravel paths.

Sadly development throughout places such as Williams Landing and Tarneit has caused heartbreaking loss of valuable sites for seed collection and often places like railway reserves and cemeteries are where remnant pockets can be found.



Microseris lanceolata



Wahlenbergia communis



Bulbine bulbosa - Bulbine Lily

Photos: Courtesy of Cassandra Twomey (Iramoo Nursery-Bush foods for gardens)

(Continued on page 5)

March Meeting Report...

By Jeanine Petts

(Continued from page 4)

In closing some of the rare endangered species mentioned further in relation to collecting seed were:

Microseris lanceolata – Yam Daisy, Murnong, Native Daisy, Plains Yam Daisy. When seeding the seed needs to be collected 3 times a day and plants will do well with extra water.

Cullen tenax – Tough Scurf-pea has 5 leaves and is usually found growing next to rock.

Cullen parvum – Small Scurf-pea has 3 leaves and is extremely rare.

Grevillea rosmarinifolia 'Lara Dwarf' has grey leaves.

Senecio macrocarpus – Large-fruited Grounel

Pimelea spinescens ssp. *spinescens* – Plains Rice-flower, Spiny Rice-flower. Ants take the seeds so a stocking is used to protect the seed prior to harvest. Plants don't transplant easily as this species has both male and female plants.

Rutidosis leptorrhynchoides – Button Wrinklewort

Diuris fragrantissima – Sunshine Orchid is the subject of a Werribee Zoo program to propagate plants and the location of remnant plants is a heavily guarded secret.

A brochure on Bush Foods for home gardens is available from Iramoo Nursery which Cassy has kindly provided in an electronic format (emailed as an attachment with our newsletter April 2016).

For more information visit the Iramoo website: <http://www.iramoo.org.au/>

Prior to breaking for supper Bill Barker offered Kentia Palm seeds (brought back from Lord Howe Island) along with the following propagating instructions:

Place seed in a small pot of sandy soil.

Cover to a depth the same size as the seed.

Place a glass or similar cover over the pot and leave in a bathroom to germinate – which may take up to 7 months.

An open discussion regarding the new meeting venue followed mentioning some of the benefits of the Owners and Trainers Bar. Unlike the John Taylor Room which has cost \$260 per year and is scheduled for a significant rental increase the Owners and Trainers Bar is available at no charge and tea and coffee are also complimentary. Parking is also easy and undercover. The issue of noisy fridges and air conditioning has been addressed by finding the switches for both and a small speaker system for guest speakers if needed. The consensus of members present was positive towards the new venue and a motion was put forward to take another month for members to consider the venue further before taking a vote at our next meeting.

Photos from Paul Piko...

By Paul Piko

The *Grevillea* "Superb" that I have in my garden is a great attraction for the birds and the bees. It has had frequent visits from the New Holland Honeyeaters, and the Eastern Spinebill.



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

By Barbara Mau

With summer well behind us autumn is a great time to stand back and take a critical peruse of the garden. I speak for myself of course my garden being in a constant state of flux, a 'work in progress'!

Now that days are cooler and the soil remains warm before winter sets in it is a good time to take stock and re-assess, re-design, re-arrange and re-plant where necessary. The long, hot, dry summer has sorted out the good performers and illuminated those that simply could not cope.

A general tidy, cutting back plants that have finished flowering, a bit of pruning to thicken up straggly, leggy shrubs and raking paths will provide a canvas that highlights where further attention maybe required.

More often it is the imbalance of form, texture, colour, or contrast that are illuminated. A point in case is my own garden with beds of indigenous grasses, field-flowers and little pockets of bulbs creating a sense of constructed 'wild plains' habitat. The result in some areas is a oneness with no point of difference, structure, or something that is in contrast with the low growing perennials'. The addition of a few shrubs or small trees may well solve the issue.

The standard *Grevilleas*, that our own Brian Weir grows so beautifully, spring to mind. These long flowering, arching beauties bring their magnificent flowers to eye-level and would provide a focal point in any garden. The elegant Grass Trees, *Xanthorrhoea australis* and *X minor* both have graceful structure and stand-alone features. If you have not yet ventured to the Cranbourne Royal Botanic Gardens to see them growing there, then you must visit. I guarantee that you will be totally inspired and glean from other diverse arrangements of garden design.

Consider how plants, with stunning characteristics, such as unique

trunks, leaves or branch arrangements, can be used as feature plants that add drama and excitement. For shady areas of the garden the *Dicksonia antarctica* brings its own graceful formality. Alone, in groups, or under-planted with other shade loving ferns you will create the feeling of a tropical environment. The lovely local Mother Shield Fern, *Polystichum proliferum*, is an example of great hardiness and perfectly suited to understorey planting.

When seeking contrast any of the *Correas*, grown and clipped as a background, will provide an excellent foil for the more quirky growth habits of instance the *Banksias*, *Isopogons* and *Dryandras*. There are many Australian natives that require little if any 'clipping' to give a little formality. Choose from the descriptors such as 'dense and rounded' shrub or tree. The following are just a few to choose from, *Acacia cognata*, *Banksia spinulosa*, *Correa glabra*, *Melaleuca armillaris*, *Lophostemon confertus*, and *Westringia fruticosa*.

Finally if your garden is small, with space a premium, here are some smaller shrubs of a meter tall, or can be contained to that height or less by clipping once a year. Some of our locals are excellent for this purpose, *Correa glabra*, *C reflexa*, *Grevillea rosmarinifolia* and *Goodenia ovata*. In addition here are some others, a short list only! Most *Correas*, *Darwinia citriodora*, *Eremophila maculata*, *E aurea*, *Grevillea baueri*, *G diminuta*, *Leptospermum scoparium*, *L polygalifolium*, *Melaleuca decussata*, *M thymifolia* and *Westringia fruticosa*.

Until next month, I hope that you enjoy this autumn planning, planting and dreaming!



Dicksonia antarctica
Fiona Hall Garden NGA.
Photo: B Mau



Clipped *Correa reflexa*, wild flowers & grasses
Photo: B Mau



Xanthorrhoea australis
Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne
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:

Ian Julian,
Barbara Mau,
Paul Piko,
Maureen Runge,
Cassandra Twomey,
Lorraine & Brian Weir.

APS VIC DIARY DATES...

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 7 - 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



OTHER EVENTS...

April 28 - A native plant identification workshop will be held at The Barham Federation Botanic Reserve 9 am - 1:30 pm. For details contact Christine Dartnell on 5453 3480 or 0404 835 384 gonefishin2527@bigpond.com

or

Roger Knight on 5453 1959 roger.knight@wmlig.org

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...

Hakea or *Banksia*? Can anyone help ID this interesting native with it's scary looking seed pod that's growing in Maureen's neighbours garden?

