

Golden

Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society
Latrobe Valley Group Inc.
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Grevillea chrysophaea – Golden Grevillea

This Month

Event	Visit to Jumbuk Park, near Jumbuk in the Strzelecki Ranges.
Location	We will meet at Churchill Shopping Centre carpark near the newsagent, carpooling for Jumbuk promptly at 10:30 AM to simplify transport.
Date	Thursday 10 March
Time	Carpool from Churchill Shopping Centre carpark, leaving there for Jumbuk at 10:30AM.

Jumbuk Park is a leisure park focused on nature, high in the Strzelecki Range. The owners, Laura and Dave, are justly proud of the natural beauty and wildlife on their property. There is a small lake to explore and a walk in some wet forest that is well habited by Lyrebirds. Bring your own picnic lunch, drinks, and chairs. If the weather turns wet there is shelter for us.

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About a dozen members enjoyed a walk and picnic lunch at our first meeting for the year at Mathison Park in Churchill on 10th February. We discussed suggestions for our monthly meetings and have determined what we hope is an interesting program for the next few months. In March we have organised a visit to Jumbuk Park, halfway between Morwell and Tarra-Bulga National Parks. Approximately 130 hectares of beautiful Gippsland rainforest has been developed as a retreat with several cabins and various sporting activities. Although a commercial enterprise, being entirely self-catering, visitors can enjoy a natural bush experience. We will be exploring the many Blackwood forest tracks and the abundant bird life. As usual, bring your lunch; meeting details under the newsletter header on page 1. Further meetings include a lunch meeting and talk by Chris Clark from APS Victoria, possible Moe Rail Trail in May and The Lyrebird Walk near Mirboo North in June. In a recent report on a discussion at an Australian Landscape Conference in Melbourne, one speaker observed that some Australians seemed to have made using native plants a moral issue with a fervour not seen in other countries. Are natives "good" and exotics "bad"? Why is there such a divide? The conclusion was that although it is great that societies such as ours have a mission to protect and promote our flora, natives and exotics can mix together beautifully. An interesting topic for our next meeting. The botanic gardens at Cranbourne are a wonderful showcase of "good natives" as are most of your gardens, but I think we have a long way to go when so many Garden Festivals and Competitions contain few native entries.

Don't forget National Eucalypt Day on March 23rd. Visit the "Eucalypt Australia" website to see some magnificent photographs and vote for your favourite tree before March 20th. Add 50 words or less and perhaps win a prize.

Hope to see you on the 10th March.

[Below is *Eucalyptus macrocarpa*, a difficult gum to maintain in our climate and soils. Ed.]



A small project that I embarked upon recently was seed sorting and sowing. I have been keeping my seeds in an old defunct freezer; the wall insulation moderates the internal temperature and the seals on the door help keep out vermin and pests. This storage dates back to the mid '90s and has never been properly sorted so I decided to bring it up to date. I had numerous small bottles of endemically collected seed for revegetating my own property, friends' properties, and my parents' farm near Leongatha. These I discarded. Then there were some seeds from the APS seed bank, some Banksias from various sources including Frew's Flower Farm at Longford, and some other random seeds. I set about sowing them. In the end I had 59 punnets of seed sitting in my hothouse and I found myself getting a bit panicky, worrying that they may all germinate. To date about a third have germinated, although with some it is a bit sketchy. A few of the most vigorous have been potted up and I am pretty sure some of those sprouted will probably damp off and die. No matter what, it looks like I will have a surplus of plants to get rid of.



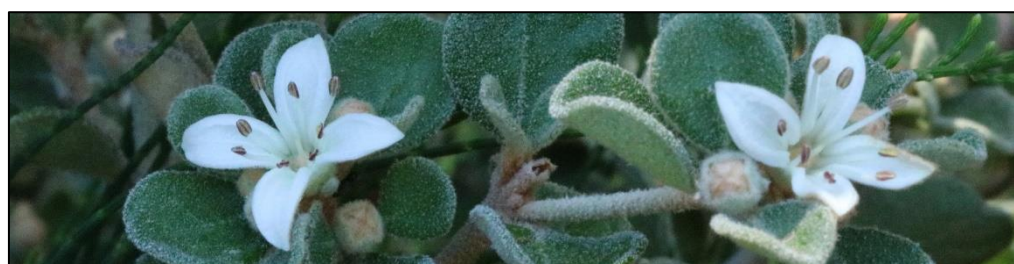
Whatever has happened to La Nina? Wasn't it supposed to be a wet summer? We haven't seen much of the wet stuff since November, and it is now evident in the garden with a lot of plants drooping or curling their leaves in an attempt to reduce moisture loss. As always there are a few that are defying the trend. A Firewheel tree (*Stenocarpus sinuatus*) that I planted in the spring to replace the loss of a large Banksia Giant Candles is looking great and punching out



new growth despite having no extra care since planting. The *Malva priessiana* (at left) that was starting its flowering season at our December breakup is down to the last few blooms, and it looks like something is making a meal of them if the raggedy edges are anything to go by. A couple of *Correas* (below) have started flowering despite no autumn break yet.

Don't forget that next year's calendar photo competition is rolling around and Cathy will be calling for your submissions around June. Keep an eye on your gardens or other places you visit and store those photos ready for selection.

And finally, don't forget that the newsletter lives on articles contributed by you, the members. I am always looking for more and I don't like nagging (but I will if I have to).



Species: *Boronia crenulata*.

Family: Rutaceae.

Derivation:

Boronia: Named after Francesco Borone (1769-94) of Milan, Italy, a very acute botanical observer and assistant successively to Sir James Edward Smith in Europe, to Afzelius in Sierra Leone and to John Sibthorpe in Greece.

crenulata: From Later Latin *crenatus* with the added diminutive -*ul-* and meaning "having the edge divided into fine teeth", referring to the leaves of some specimens.



Common Name: Aniseed Boronia.

Distribution: There are 5 subspecies (one with 2 varieties) of Aniseed Boronia in Western Australia, with most occurring south-west of the line drawn from northern Perth to Albany and the Stirling Ranges, with some outliers (1 subspecies) further north in the Shark Bay area.

Description: A dense, dwarf shrub to 1m tall and broad, with upright branches. Leaves are glabrous and aromatic, up to 15mm long and 7mm wide, spoon-shaped, with entire or toothed margins. Flowers are borne on very short, thick stalks either terminally or solitarily in the upper leaf axils, are about 15mm in diameter, with four petals in various shades of pink.

Opinion: I have had my plant in a tub for years without actually knowing its name! It's only the writing of this article that has prompted me to finally identify it and then only to species level; I have no idea of the subspecies or whether it is a variety that has been bred/alterd/manipulated by the nursery industry. The tub is shared with another WA plant, an *Adenanthos*, and is positioned in the western garden bed, inside the fence, surrounded by the Tasman Flax Lily that is taking over the area. Even though it is at least 20 years old, it is still only small, no more than 50cm tall and broad, but seems to be happy enough and flowers regularly every year. Like most of my garden, neglect is the main interaction between me and my *Boronia*; it has never been fed and it was probably only re-potted once, when its companion joined it in the tub. I do throw a bit of water at it though, on those rare occasions (like now) when the real stuff doesn't fall from the sky like it usually does in Boolarra. Back in the early 2000's I did try to propagate it from cuttings, with some

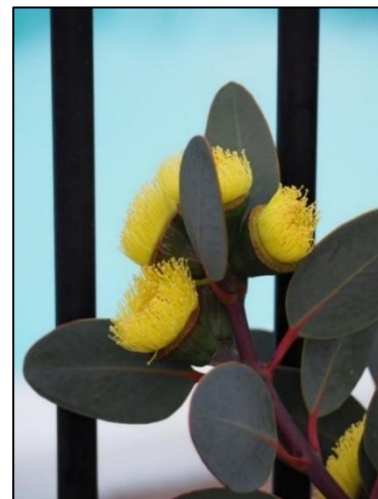
success in that roots did strike and several were potted up into tubes, but none made it further than that. Probably time to give it another go!

Sources: Elliot & Jones – Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants, Volume 2.
Sharr – WA Plant Names and their Meanings.
Online – FloraBase: Flora of WA.

How about a Bell-fruited Mallee in your garden?

By Col Jackson

This bonza little gum tree, scientifically known as *Eucalyptus preissiana*, is growing on my daughter and her partner's suburban property at Geelong. In its natural environment of the coastal areas from Albany to Esperance in South-west Western Australia it grows as a small tree, often multi-trunked, to about two to three metres high by about the same in width. It has smooth bark and oval shaped, thick green leaves. When in flower, usually in winter or spring, the large flowers (which are up to 30mm in diameter) form a prominent display along the branches, readily attracting nectar feeding birds. The flowering is followed by displays of the interesting bell-shaped fruits that give it its common name. Given that it comes from the Sandy State, it is no surprise that it prefers open, well-drained soils.



With that said, in this location there are two of them doing quite well in Geelong clay. They have only been in the ground a couple of years and are a bit over a metre high and wide, one beside the driveway in the front, and one in the back yard. Both are threatening to become larger than their position may allow, but at the current growth rate it will be many years. Even then, being mallees, they accept harsh pruning quite readily and will resprout from lignotubers at the base of the trunk, often growing into a more attractive multi stemmed tree.

If you have the opportunity and come across one of these, consider giving it a go in your garden, even if you only have a suburban block.



February Meeting roundup

By Cathy Beamish

Our first outing of the year was to Mathison Park in Churchill where we planned on walking around the lake, having lunch and discussing options for the rest of the year.

We had a reasonable turnout for the day. We met as planned at 10.30am at the entrance to the park on Mackeys Road. After a short chat with people, we started our meander along the track as it followed the edge of the lake.

Not much of interest was sighted until we got to the information board that showed photos of native vegetation with captions that named the plants and also explained what they had been used for by the local Indigenous community.

A bit further along the track we reached the fenced off old homestead, which is currently under repair. We read the information board that explained the origins of the homestead and the unique water wells that had been dug into the ground.

From there, most of us headed up the hill to check out how the various species of pines were doing since they had been planted by the Friends group.

As you can see from the photo, the Wollemi pines are doing really well. We also found what Mike thinks is Bunya Pine. One of these was growing straight up with another looking like it had the top cut out of it as it was spreading across the ground.

We continued to try and name other species but didn't have much success, so we kept on our way around the path and ended up in the gully that runs parallel to the road that Kurnai College is on. Along there we heard various birds that I found amplified quite significantly when I used the sound gear that Ray had brought along. I initially jumped in fright as I hadn't expected everything to sound so loud through the headphones!

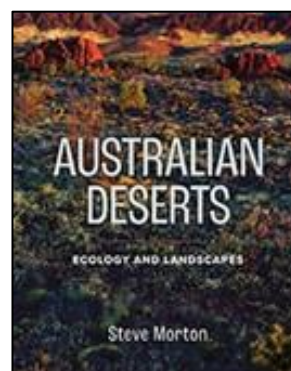
At the next track intersection, we chose to continue walking around the remainder of the lake. There were a few different water birds floating around but no snakes to be seen anywhere.

Once back at the tables, we found Marilyn, Jill and Doris relaxing and chatting while drinking their coffee. Once we all had lunch Jill opened the meeting and discussions were had on activities we could do for the next few months.

We all left the park around 1.30pm.



A truly monumental book, the like of which I can't readily recall since Penny van Oosterzee's *The Centre* came out 30 years ago and, while (remarkably and deservedly) *The Centre* is still in print, its scope is more limited, focussed on the central deserts. The Australian deserts are very dear to my heart, and this book features two of my favourite interpreters of them. Morton has studied the ecology of deserts since moving to Alice Springs in 1984 to work with CSIRO. He is still there, as an Honorary Professorial Fellow with Charles Darwin University, and his knowledge of the deserts is encyclopaedic. And, though he doesn't feature on the cover, the book owes much too to photographer Mike Gillam, an Alice Springs 'character', passionate and forthrightly outspoken about conservation and social issues. He is also, I believe, one of Australia's foremost nature photographers, spending days off the grid in the desert to get the photos he wants, from close-up portraits of insects to huge panoramas. And he, like Morton, truly understands the deserts. As I suggested at the start, this is a grand book on a grand topic, covering all the Australian deserts and arid lands which, as the map in the preface shows, covers most of the country. Morton's writing is lucid when describing the science, and even lyrical at other times. There is an excellent example of this in the introduction, where he muses on teenage memories of Brown Songlarks displaying on the Hay Plains, linked to stories by the property owner of singing in WWII POW camps and Morton's own journey from farmer to desert ecologist. In the preface he states his intention to tell the story of the deserts 'as it is', and if you doubt that there is another way, please read his account of a visiting film crew in Alice Springs in the 1980s and their approach to making the desert fit popular misconceptions. You'll find it in the first paragraph of the book. Chapters include the nature of Australian deserts (extremes of wet and dry) and plant life, with a focus on particular groups and species, including River Red Gums, Desert Oaks, mallee, and very many more. Discussions in this chapter include the implications of surplus sugar production, fire and the very origin of the desert plants. There is a long chapter on how a wide range of animals use various plant and fungal products, and another on recycling of plant litter and animal waste products. There is a particularly fascinating chapter on invertebrate predators, another on vertebrate predators and yet another on the role of waterholes. Each chapter ends with a helpful series of summary points to assist in revision if you're that way inclined, reinforced by an excellent overall summarising chapter. This is an important book, in that it helps demystify the majority of the country, by area, in a clear and accessible way. It also manages to be very beautiful – did I mention that the photos are superb? And yes, I really do love this book.



Australian Deserts; Ecology and Landscapes by Steve Morton, CSIRO Publishing. 304 pages. RRP \$60

[Ian Fraser is a Canberra-based professional naturalist and writer. In 2012 he launched the natural history blog 'Ian Fraser, Talking Naturally', at <http://ianfrasertalkingnaturally.blogspot.com.au/>

This contribution was submitted by Meg Byers, who knows Ian through previous environmental tours in Australia. Editor]

2022 Calendar Spot – March

By Cathy Beamish

We have seen some great fungi the last couple of years. I find it a challenge to take a photo that makes the fungi look more than just a bland blob in the middle of the shot. I usually manage to mess up the lighting or get the angle all wrong. The theory of needing to take a hundred shots before getting a good one certainly applies to me! This photo was taken in Morwell National Park when we joined some of the friends' group to escort a class of high school students through the park. We were there to assist them with a project they were doing on the different ecologies that could be found in the area.

As had been the case in the previous year when our APS group had walked through the park, the number of different fungi popping their heads through the soil was great to see.



Coming events of interest

Note: Please check the Vic APS website for cancellations before attending.

11 – 16 September 2022, ANPSA Biennial Conference 2022 – Kiama, New South Wales. Preliminary details of the Conference, pre- and post-Conference tours and the beautiful town of Kiama can be found on the APS (NSW) website.

26 to 30 September 2022 - 7th Global Botanic Gardens Congress, Melbourne. *Influence and Action: Botanic Gardens as Agents of Change.* Includes a youth program for future gardens' leaders aged 18 to 24.

15 & 16 October 2022 – 14th FJC Rogers Seminar. Topic: Fabulous peas (the typical 'pea-flowered' plants from the sub-family Faboideae. York on Lilydale in Mt Evelyn. Expressions of interest and queries to fabulouspeas2022@gmail.com



2022 Latrobe Valley Group Events Calendar

Month	Day	Date	Activity	Time
Mar	Thursday	10	Meet at Churchill for car pool to Jumbuk Park	10:30
April			Bungip State Park Bushfood walk.	
May	Thursday	5	Alpine Flora of Victoria – Chris Clarke	12:00
June		9	Moe Rail Trail?	
July			Lyrebird Walk – Mirboo North	
			Spring Ballan Trip?	

Rainfall for 2021 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	92	57	78	88	65	143	73	83	128	180	113	28	1125
Brian	Drouin (east)	83	58	80	64	68	134	87	44	174	130	106	26	1054
Carolyn	Yarragon	79	30	60	65	75	117	73	102	151	93	88	20	951
Wayne	Tanjil South	108	37	89	77	175	195	90	95	207	167	112	64	1416
Peter	Mirboo North	92	53	107	81	101	274	88	78	170	87	96	45	1272
Judy	Moe South	97	25	89	79	75	175	79	83	197	101	93	37	1130
Mike	Boolarra	95	43	81	66	84	181	67	92	186	88	83	35	1098
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	79	35	98	63	71	266	56	114	120	136	117	26	1178
John	Traralgon South	83	16	135	35	26	229	58	68	91	75	68	33	915

Rainfall for 2022 (in mm)

		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Diane	Drouin (west)	67												
Brian	Drouin (east)	74												
Carolyn	Yarragon	107												
Wayne	Tanjil South													
Peter	Mirboo North													
Judy	Moe South													
Mike	Boolarra	72												
Mary	Jeeralang Junction	68												
John	Traralgon South													

<https://apsvic.org.au/aps-latrobe-valley/>

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Title page photo: *Grevillea chrysophaea* at Holey Plains State Park by Mike Beamish