



# Correa Mail

Newsletter No 392 - August, 2023

**JULY MEETING**

**Geelong Botanic Gardens**

Our speaker was Kellee Reissinger, the Director of the Geelong Botanic Gardens. Kellee's talk focused on the garden and her plans for the future with increased community involvement.



Kellee has always had an interest in plants and wanted to be a park ranger. But the choice between University and money saw her start work in 1992 rather than go to university. Terrestrial orchids are her passion and she has spent many hours wandering the bush at Anglesea.

She did studied horticulture and as part of her apprenticeship won a scholarship to study in Japan. The manicured nature of the traditional gardens did not fit her more 'organic' style.

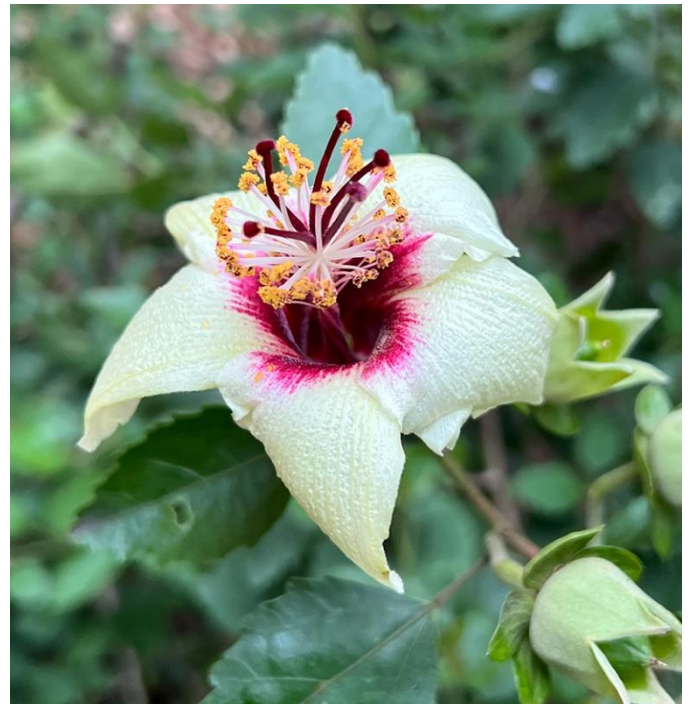
In 2004 she began work at Werribee Zoo in the experiencing all aspects of horticulture – gardens, propagation, revegetation, exhibit plantings, animal food, education and conservation. Her frustration was that the focus was on animals, rather than plants.

Kellee's move to the Botanic Gardens was inevitable and her focus on plants and their conservation can be fulfilled here. Chilean Wine Palm, *Jubaea chilensis* is a case in point. It is the southern-most naturally occurring

palm and is critically endangered in its native Chile. They were used to make wine from the sap. These palms grow well in our almost Mediterranean climate, and there is a very impressive specimen at the gardens.



The Phillip Island Hibiscus, *Hibiscus insularis* is an extremely rare plant from Phillip Island just south of Norfolk Island. The entire natural extent of this species is just two small clumps, and each clump apparently consists of multiple separate stems of a single genotype. They grow readily in local gardens and are hardy and easy to propagate from cuttings.



**The Phillip Island Hibiscus, *Hibiscus insularis***

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The other side of the coin comes with the Wollomi Pine. When this extremely rare native pine was released into the nursery trade in 2004 it was bought by many people with good intentions. The trees are now extremely tall and people are loathe to plant them in their gardens and the GBG are getting frequent calls from folks wanting to 'donate' their giant pines.

Kellee sees the role of horticulture in conservation as an integral part of the work of GBG. To recognise the importance of local flora; to be representative of genetic diversity of target populations in the wild as an insurance policy – local, native and international plants; and to support conservation education and environmental awareness in conjunction with groups like APS Geelong. How do we harness to knowledge held by gardeners and plant enthusiasts?



***Sophora toromira* - an Easter Island plant extinct in the wild since 1960. Five specimens are held at GBG**

There is a need to focus on flora from our region which are successful in cultivation and to gain an idea of what is happening in the field through our Conservation Rangers, Landcare groups and GBG staff. Many rare plants are suitable for cultivation and one of the roles of the GBG is to encourage people to grow them in the garden and explain why it's a good idea. But, the garden also conserves other plants ... roses, Pelargoniums, Salvias and others.

Kellee is very keen on getting the community more involved in using the gardens, helping with planning and learning about the plants that are featured. How can the gardens be better used? Yoga or Tai Chi in the gardens and groups like Landcare and Friends groups are vital if the gardens are to become more user friendly.

The 'new' 21st Century Garden is focused on low water use plants with an emphasis on indigenous plants, plants from harsh environments and those showing survival adaptations. Coastal plants are a good example, living in harsh environments with many adaptations to cope with the sand, wind, and salt.



Indigenous plants are important here, too. By actively displaying the regions flora and capturing its diversity people can see the potential for them as garden plants. Plants of the Brisbane Ranges National Park are a prime example. There are a number of rare and endangered plants there (*Grevillea chrysophaea*, *Grevillea steigitziana*) – and many not so rare plants that would make a great addition to a garden.



***Grevillea chrysophaea* – Brisbane Ranges**

The GBG collections fall into three basic categories :-

**Amenity collection** – This encompasses most of plants, grown to showcase the species and provide interest and amenity for visitors. One of these is a food bowl collection to assist and educate on growing plants for food.

**Horticultural collection** – These are plants grown for interpretation, education, and horticultural research. A joint project with Melbourne's RMBG in 'raising rarity'.

**Botanic collection** – Collections with a scientific basis. This applies to just two collections and one plant and these are associated with external researchers. One of the plants here, *Aframomum melegueta* – Grains of Paradise- is a species in the ginger family, which Kellee became interested in during her time at the zoo. She began growing it as a possible preventative for the heart conditions common in captive gorillas.

We thank Kellee for a most entertaining and educational discussion of the Geelong Botanic Gardens.



Our plant table this month was spectacular, given that we are in the dead of a very cold winter. Bruce handled to conversation with his usual aplomb.

As is often the case, Grevilleas featured strongly with a good number of hybrids and true species. The 'Queensland hybrids', which all have *G. bippinatifida* as a parent, are great plants, which seem to do well in the Geelong area.

Such hybrids included 'Evelyn's Coronet', 'Red Hooks', 'Scarlet King' and Winpara Gold ... all great plants for the garden. *Grevillea* 'Midas Touch' is a seedling from *G. juncifolia* growing in Ade's garden in Belmont. It was labelled as 'a tall shrub to 3m' when purchased some ten years ago. It is now a tree at 5m x 5m and is truly spectacular in the spring.



***Grevillea* 'Midas Touch' in full flower**

*G.* 'Molly' has large, deep crimson/red flowers and is a cross with *G. aurea*. *G.* 'Peaches'n'Cream' is a reasonably compact plant growing to 1.5m x 2m. It responds well to pruning after flowering. However, it is often difficult to define 'after flowering'. It shows some flowers throughout the year although spring/summer is the peak. A couple of startling red grevilleas on show were developed by Phil Vaughan – 'Katherine's Fire' and 'Katherine's Sisiter'.

*G.* 'Superb' is an old faithful – a cross with the white form of *G. banksii* – and distinguished from other plants with similar coloured flowers by its yellow-tipped anthers.



***Grevillea* 'Superb'**

True species included *G. speciosa* ssp. *dimorpha* with deep red, stem hugging flowers; a fine leafed form of *G. aspera* from the Flinders Ranges; *G. alpina* from the Grampians region; *G. magnifica*, a spectacular Western Australian plant with cylindrical flowers on long vertical branches; *G. dielsiana* with sharp leaves and flowers varying from salmon pink through orange to deep red and *G. zygloba* a pink form with a strong 'divisive' scent - some liken it to honey others to unwashed socks.

*Grevillea pimeliodes* is not at all *Grevillea*-like but more like a *Pimelea* in habit and leaf form, as is suggested by its name. It is an upright shrub which may reach 3 metres in the right conditions. The leaves are elliptical and covered in fine hairs. The bright yellow-orange flowers are held in clusters at the ends of the branchlets.

It is a very attractive plant with a relatively long flowering season, but may be difficult to maintain in our humid summers. It prefers open sunny or part shade and needs water in the hotter months. Its natural habitat of Jarrah and Marri forestes in south west WA mean it is suitable to grow under more mature Eucalypts.



***G. pimeliodes* - Photo: By Murray Fagg, Wikipedia**

It has been confused in the nursery trade for many years with *G. drummondii*, a very similar plant. *G.*



*pimeliodes* has been sold as *G. drummondii* and vice versa.

There was a good selection of *Thryptomene* and quite some discussion about them and their similarities to *Scholtzia*, *Baeckea* and *Micromyrtus*. There were specimens of these on display, including *S. oligandra*, *M. ciliate* and several *Thryptomene* of unknown origin. One is known to club members as 'Roger's Special'. The plant arose in Roger Wileman's garden, but he swears he has never had one growing previously. Its origin is a mystery. Roger grew several plants from cutting which he gave to members. The one in Ade's garden has grown quite large, with a lovely arching form and a stunning floral display.



***Thryptomene* 'Roger's Special'.**

Banksias were represented with a number of specimens, including two black flowering forms of *B. spinulosa*, the most striking of which was *B. 'Black Magic'*. There was also a large flowered form of *B. spinulosa* with lovely orange/yellow inflorescences.

*Banksia ericifolia* also has large orange/yellow flowers. *B. tricuspis* is a small, open shrub from Mt. Leseur in WA. The small golf-ball sized, round flowers are a pale lemon yellow.

*Hakea multilineata* and *H. francissiana* are well-known, popular garden plants. Matt Leach brought along *Hakea minyma*, a less well known plant but a very nice addition to any garden.



***Hakea minyma***

It is a desert species from central south WA, north west SA and south west NT. It features long, slender strap-like leaves and racemes of creamy flowers, aging pink. The flowers have a strong, pleasant scent. The specific 'minmya' is from the Pitjantjatjara word for woman and refers to the shape of the fruits.

Eremophilas are a generally hardy plant for our gardens, but often need to be grafted onto a rootstock that can handle wetter less freely draining soils. Among those on our table were *E. subfloccata* with soft grey-green foliage and attractive green/yellow flowers; *E. maculata*, an old favourite with deep maroon/purple flowers with heavily spotted throats; *E. glabra* 'Brice' with masses of lime green flowers; *E. miribilis* with large, very showy pink and white flowers heavily spotted with deep purple and *E. decipiens*, with brighter green foliage and red, orange or yellow flowers.



***Verticordia staminosa***

Among the many other specimens was the rare and interesting *Verticordia staminosa*, known from a very few sites in the wheat-belt of WA. The flowers appear on the ends of the stems in small bunches of two or three. The buds are spherical and a deep, bright red. The flowers are pendulous, with the feathery petals which give *Verticordias* their common name of 'Feather-flower'. A group of long greenish stamens hang below the fringe of petals.

**PLANT of the MONTH - *Eremophila Meringur Midnight***

*Our speaker, Kellee, chose Eremophila 'Meringur Midnight' as Plant of the Month. It was brought along by Carmel Addlem and Carmel writes ...*

*Eremophila 'Meringur Midnight'* is a hybrid of *Eremophila bignoniiflora* x *Eremophila viscida*. This eremophila has large, gorgeous deep purple flowers and fine, green, linear leaves.



My plant was grown a few years ago from a cutting that Margaret G brought in for our plant table. It is growing in clay and bluestone gravel which was the original turning circle on our Driveway. It is about 1mt x 1mt and, although guarded by old bread trays, those pesky rabbits have managed to keep the lower half well pruned. It usually flowers for about three months August – October.

#### 2023 MEETINGS and OUTINGS

<b>Aug meeting</b>	AGM and Photo Competition
<b>Sept 2</b>	Visit to Inverleigh gardens
<b>Sept meeting</b>	Marie Goodes – Little Desert Flora
<b>Sept 23</b>	APS Victoria AGM
<b>Oct 8</b>	Open Day Geelong Botanic Gardens
<b>Oct 17</b>	Jason Caruso – Eucs for the garden
<b>Nov meeting</b>	Miriam Ford – Prostanthera etc.
<b>Dec 10</b>	Xmas break-up BBQ

#### AUGUST MEETING - AGM and Photo Competition

The Annual General Meeting of the Australian Plants Society – Geelong will be held at The Ballroom on Tuesday August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 7.30 pm. We are trying something different this year ... free food! We will gather at The Ballroom at 6.00 pm and will have pizzas delivered at 6.30. Please let us know if you will be there for pizzas, and if you have any dietary requirements.

All Committee positions will become vacant and elections will be held. Nomination form and proxy voting form are attached to this newsletter.

Please note that only current financial members can vote and only current financial members can stand for election. A 2023/2024 membership is attached to this

newsletter. We need new blood on the committee. We have not had a President for the past year, and, after many years on the committee, Frank Scheelings has informed us that he will not be standing again. Thanks, Frank for your great service to the club. Our members are aging and everyone has their own lives to lead. **But, with small numbers at meetings and outings and current committee members covering multiple positions, the future of the club is in jeopardy.** Please give some thought to standing for a position on YOUR committee.

As has become tradition we will hold our Annual Photo Competition at the AGM on 15<sup>th</sup> August. Bruce has kindly provided the following guidance: Once again photographs will be lodged electronically and voted on electronically. It's not about the 'best' photo, but the most popular. Be in it. All photos will be viewed at the AGM using the projector with the winners announced on the night. Here's how it works ....

- We will have three categories .. Australian Plants, Australian Wildlife and Australian Landscapes.
- You can enter two photos in each category, a total of six entries per person. Photos must be your own, taken in Australia, and be anonymous. That is, have nothing in them which identifies the photographer.
- Email your photos to Bruce McGinness at bsmcginness@gmail.com by the 6<sup>th</sup> August. Please make sure your subject line in the email is: 'Photo Competition Entries'.
- Once they are all in, Bruce will send out a link to where all the photos can be viewed. They will each have a number (no names). Between 6<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> August, you can take your time perusing the photos and visit as many times as you wish.
- Choose your favourite photo for each category. You will also receive information about how to register your vote in each category. Voting closes on 13<sup>th</sup> August. Winners will be announced at the AGM and prizes presented on the night. Let's make this a successful competition. Get your entries in.



**A previous winner in the 'Australian Plants' category – *Guichenotia macrantha* by Frank Scheelings.**



## SEPTEMBER 2<sup>nd</sup> EXCURSION – Inverleigh Gardens

On Saturday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> we have been invited to join with members from The Friends of Melton Botanic Gardens to visit the Leach's garden in Inverleigh, and the garden of their neighbours, the Kerdels. We'll meet Matt at 42 Gregory Drive, Inverleigh at 1:30 pm.



Leach garden at 42 Gregory Drive, Inverleigh

Please park in the vacant block next door at 52 Gregory Drive

Matt and Nicole have kindly provided a short history of the gardens to encourage you to visit. Regular attendees of our meetings, familiar with Matt's contributions to the plant table, will need no encouragement.

Victor & Mora Leach purchased their 100 acre property in Inverleigh in 1974. Victor was attracted to the farm as it had remnant mature Red Gum and Manna Gum trees, as well as it being next to the Inverleigh Common.

Over the years they had sheep grazing the paddocks, but the house paddock (15 acres) was fenced off due to previous compulsory council gravel extraction for roads, which ceased not long before they purchased the property.



This area was unsuitable for pasture and grazing. Victor and Mora noticed once it was fenced off from the sheep that natural regrowth of indigenous vegetation occurred.

The building of the main house and gardens started back in 1987. The gardens were started to attract local birdlife, which drew Victor towards growing Australian native plants. In the beginning, plants were planted without much foresight into their growing conditions or size. Frosts were a major cause of harm to plants as Inverleigh can be prone to some fairly severe frosts, but also drought.

A few trips to Western Australia in the late 80's and early 90's piqued Victor and Matt's interest into more genera of Australian native plants, especially dryland Eucalypts and most plants from the Proteaceae family (e.g. Banksias, Hakeas etc).

In 2003 Matt's little house next door was built onto the property and his garden was started.



In 2011 Victor and Mora subdivided their 100 acres, keeping roughly 18 acres for themselves – including the fenced off area where the indigenous plants had been growing and an additional 'spare' block at the 'back' (which is now the front). The entrance changed from being off Common Rd to now being off Gregory Drive.

The gardens continue to grow and change and in roughly 2016 a kangaroo & wallaby-proof fence was built to keep those chewing macropods out of the house gardens, this needed to be modified to later make it rabbit and hare-proof. There is a resident mob of between 15-20 Kangaroos that 'mow' the grass in the un-(macropod-proof)-fenced areas.





There are over 1,000 species of plants on the property, with over 200 species of Eucalypts, 60 species of Banksia, 80 species of Hakeas, over 80 species of Acacia, 100 species of Grevillea, 20 recorded species of naturally-occurring orchids and many others. There is also a fenced off orchard and veggie garden, as well as a shade/hot house for Victor and Matt's propagation forays.

Robyn and Stuarde **Kerdel's garden at 58 Gregory Drive** Inverleigh is a garden of two parts. The "house" garden, of just over half an acre, is bordered by a unique boundary fence created with 88 recycled mattresses that frame the garden and provide some protection from the tastebuds of the local wildlife! It is a mixture of native and exotic species divided by gravel paths and archways.

The remaining two acres consist of large red gums, Sheoaks and Manna Gums with underplanting of many native species.

The driveway entry is Stuarde's recycled metal art "gallery" with many quirky and unique sculptures that are for sale.

The garden was commenced in 2015 and contains many species of acacia, banksia, hakea, grevillea, callistemon and eucalyptus as the main plantings. It continues to be a work in progress and a wonderful place to spend our time.



**Kerdel's garden**

## OCTOBER 8th – OPEN DAY GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS

We've been invited to hold a 'stall' at the GBG Open Day on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> October. The idea is to promote our group to visitors to the gardens. There will be a big community involvement and lots of people coming to visit.

We'll have a flower table, similar to the one at our plant sale, and we'll chat to folks about the beauty of native plants. Hopefully, we'll encourage a few new members to come on board.

More information in the next newsletter.

## DECOLONISING FIRE SCIENCE

An interesting meeting was recently conducted by the Royal Society of Victoria to try to better understand the science behind fire management of our land, and the importance of it to aboriginal people. The description below is taken from the Royal Society's You Tube channel, and the link is a most interesting and informative watch.

*'We can expect that the science of fire should intersect with fire use by First Peoples, because an understanding of fire that enabled cultures to coexist with it for at least 65,000 years must have its roots in scientific reality. Our understanding of that relationship is, however, deeply troubled.*

*The predominant concepts of modern fire science arise from a paradigm that valorises the role of human agency, dismissing and even demonising natural ecological processes. The result is that fire science has become a tool with which Indigenous fire knowledge is reinterpreted to support the colonial narrative and reinforce pseudo-science in a loop of circular reasoning. The implications of this are far-reaching, and poor fire science now drives management that decimates carbon storage, threatens the existence of numerous species, and drives much of the impact of bushfire on human society.*

*Ecologist and environmental scientist Dr Philip Zylstra is joined by Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Elder, Uncle David Wandin, to examine the roots of this dilemma. Phil provides examples in the current context, then demonstrate how the narrative is reversed when we adopt an understanding of fire that is informed by ecological processes, interpreted within a sound mechanistic framework. Using the Fire Research and*

*Modelling Environment (FRaME), Philip will introduce Ecological Control Theory, showing how forests limited the impacts of fire and maintained thriving populations of fire-sensitive species long before the arrival of humans.*

*Finally, Phil and Uncle Dave demonstrate how a paradigm of cooperation rather than domination allowed for the long-term coexistence with fire demonstrated by First Peoples, and the ways that we can adjust our current approaches to cooperate with Country.*

### **About the Speakers**

*Dr Philip Zylstra came into bushfire research from a background in fire management and remote area firefighting. Since that time he has developed the first and only peer-reviewed fire behaviour model for most Australian forests, as well as the first model globally to calculate the direct effects of fire on flora, fauna and soils. His work focuses on understanding the ways that our interaction with forests affect fire risk. Using fire history analysis and state-of-the-art modelling, Phil's*



*work reconciles deep knowledge from First Peoples with forest ecology and a complex understanding of fire behaviour to provide critically-needed guidance in fire management.*

*Phil is an Adjunct Associate Professor with Curtin University's School of Molecular and Life Sciences (Perth), and a Research Associate of the University of New South Wales (Sydney).*

*Uncle Dave Wandin is a Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Elder and Cultural Practices Manager (Fire and Water) at the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation. He is a*



*recognised leader in the promotion and execution of cultural (cool) burns in Victoria.*

*Prior to this role, Uncle Dave was instrumental in the establishment of the Corporation's Narrap Team, a group of cultural land managers. He has also sat on the Waterways of the West Ministerial Advisory Committee.*

*Uncle Dave is the chairperson of the Wandoon Estate Aboriginal Corporation. This organisation represents the*

*Wurundjeri people, the Indigenous owners of the historical property "Coranderrk" in the Yarra Valley. Set up as an Aboriginal Reserve in 1863, Coranderrk closed in 1924. In 1999, the Indigenous Land Corporation purchased 80 hectares of the property and gave ownership to the Wandoon Estate. Coranderrk now operates as a farm for native bush foods and to restore environmental health and productivity to the farm.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Af36dt017A0>

**Image of Dr Zylstra courtesy Curtin University, image of Uncle Dave Wandin courtesy Melbourne Water.**

### **GBG EXCURSION – Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> July**

Twelve members risked the weather to join Kellee Reissing, GBG Director, in a visit to Geelong Botanic Gardens as follow-up her talk at our last meeting. Kellee very kindly gave up her day off to join us.



The talk was wide-reaching and varied, with lots of questions asked and answered, and lots of ideas discussed. Much of the talk was about the native boundary of the gardens ... the past issues, future plans, possible improvements and new directions. It was a very enjoyable few hours despite the brisk wind and occasional shower.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

If you've forgotten to renew your membership, we'd love to have you back in the APS Geelong fold. You must be a financial member to vote at the AGM, to stand for a committee position or to nominate or second the nomination to a committee position. Membership forms are on our website at ...

[http://www.apsgeelong.org/Memberships%20Form%202022\\_23.pdf](http://www.apsgeelong.org/Memberships%20Form%202022_23.pdf)