



# Correa Mail

Newsletter No 388 - January, 2023

## FEBRUARY MEETING

## Fun and Games

Once again our February 21<sup>st</sup> meeting will be the competition for the 'It Stuck To My Shoe' Cup. Last year was a really fun night for the inaugural competition, and I'm sure this year will be equally enjoyable.

Come along and enjoy a fun night of games and trivia. We cater for vegetarian and vegan members, as all the questions are plant based ☺



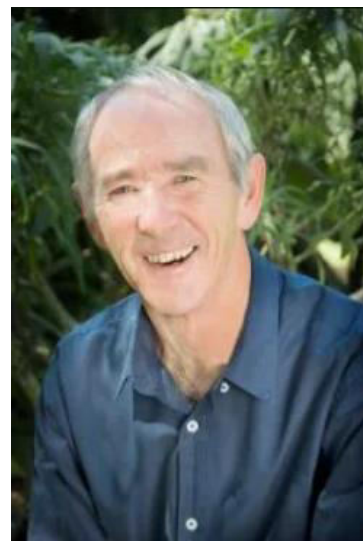
Thanks to Nicole and Matt for their considerable effort in bringing this prestigious event to you. Hope to see everyone there.

## MARCH 21<sup>st</sup> MEETING

## Significant Trees

Our speaker for the March 21<sup>st</sup> meeting will be **Dr. Gregory Moore** from the University of Melbourne, and his topic will be 'Significant Trees'.

Greg was a Senior Lecturer and Lecturer in Plant Science and Arboriculture at Burnley from 1979, and Principal of Burnley College of the Institute of Land Food Resources at Melbourne University from 1988 to 2007. He was Head of the School of Resource Management at the University from 2002 to 2007.



Apart from a general interest in horticultural plant science, revegetation and ecology, Greg has a specific interest in all aspects of arboriculture - the scientific study of the cultivation and management of trees. He has contributed to the development of Australian Standards in pruning and amenity tree evaluation and

has been a major speaker at conferences in Australia, Israel, Hong Kong, USA and New Zealand in recent years. He was the inaugural president of the International Society of Arboriculture, Australian Chapter.

He has been a member of the National Trust of Victoria's Register of Significant Trees since 1988 and has chaired the committee since 1996. Greg has been on the Board of Greening Australia (Victoria) since 1989 and has been an active member of various sub-

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committees. He has chaired Treenet since 2005 and has been on the Board of SGA since 2002. He is a ministerial nomination as a Trustee for the Trust for Nature.

#### DECEMBER XMAS BREAK-UP

December 4th

Our Christmas break-up BBQ was well attended, despite it being held on the first really hot day of the year. The venue was great, with electric BBQ, toilets and a huge undercover area that kept us out of the sun. Thanks, Frank, for the suggestion.

#### GEELONG BOTANIC GARDENS STALL - March 5<sup>th</sup>

Geelong Botanic Gardens are holding an Open Day on March 5<sup>th</sup>. We will have a little display stall there. The aim is to promote our club and attract new members. We'll also have a flower table to show off the fabulous colours that can be had in a native garden. 10.00 am – 2.00 pm, all welcome to attend and help with the stall.

#### 2023 MEETINGS and OUTINGS

<b>Feb 21</b>	Games and Trivia Night
<b>March 5</b>	Stall at GBG Open Day
<b>March 21</b>	Dr. Gregory Moore – Significant Trees
<b>April 1, 2023</b>	2023 Plant Sale
<b>Sept 24-25</b>	Proposed Little Desert Weekend

#### THE BATTLE FOR EUCALYPTUS PULVERULENTA

By Bruce McGinness

The *Eucalyptus pulverulenta* 'Baby Blue' (Silver-leaved Mountain Gum) in my front nature strip was grown from seed purchased from Nindethana Seed Company. The nature strip was planted in 2016 with *E. pulverulenta* being the star attraction. Passing pedestrians have stopped to ask me its name and requests have been put into the letter box asking for more information.



Bruce's *E. pulverulenta* – July, 2016

It has decussately arranged, grey, stalk-less, heart-shaped leaves which form attractive whorls on the stems. They are used extensively in the cut flower trade. The tree keeps this foliage as it matures, unlike some grey leaved Eucalypts which revert to the olive-green colour eg. *E. latens* 'Moon Lagoon'. It produces whorls of white flowers which, while not spectacular, are still attractive.

In Ivan Holiday's book, 'A Gardener's Guide to Eucalyptus,' it is described as a small narrow, sometimes straggly tree to about 7metres high. I think this under sells its virtues. It is restricted to only a few locations of the central and southern tablelands of New South Wales, including the Blue Mountains.



The leaves of *E. pulverulenta*

It has flourished in the nature strip with minimal care, just supplementary watering in the first year it was planted. It has been trouble-free except for an attack by caterpillars that practically defoliated the tree. Generally, I am happy to share my plants with wildlife, but the caterpillars were getting out of hand.





**Caterpillar damage – May 2021**

My solution was in May 2021 to cut the tree back and remove all the foliage. I have managed to keep the tree clear of caterpillars and remove any that try to sneak in for a feed. If any of our members can enlighten me, I would be interested to know what type of moth is responsible for the damage.



**After the cutback – April 2021**

I have seen *E. pulverulenta* when it has been left unpruned and it does get a bit unruly. The caterpillars may have done me a favour by forcing me to cut the tree back. In my opinion the pruning has produced a tree with a compact attractive form. If desired, it could also be coppiced regularly to keep it to a required size and provide sprays of foliage for cut flower displays.



**April 2022**

Penny collected some foliage for dyeing silk and this may be an interesting facet of the tree that can be added to in future newsletters.

**WHAT'S IN A NAME? - Ade Foster**

I've had an interest in natural history since I was a small boy gathering tadpoles in the table drains along Queens Park. I've kept fish, native finches, budgies, canaries, frogs, blue-tongues, turtles and water scorpions as pets. I knew the names of all the birds, reptiles and mammals I was likely to encounter, and could recognise lots more from my constant poring through Neville Cayley's *'What Bird Is That?'*.

But, I always stayed away from plants ... they were just too hard. There were too many and the use of scientific names frightened me. 'Why don't plant people use common names?' I would ask my mum, tearfully.

But now, they give me comfort. They ensure that there is no confusion about what plant we are discussing. Well, not as much, anyway. And they're not as scary as I thought, although there is still the difficulty of getting my tongue wrapped around the Ancient Greek or Latin pronunciations.





Common names are fine, and easy, but only if everyone agrees on what common name to use. But, no-one ever does. Take birds, for example. There are only 750-odd species in Australia, so it's not like plants with almost 19,000 that flower. We can easily learn 700-odd names. However, there is a very common, dapper little black and white bird seen all over Australia. My Dad called it a Peewee, I knew it as a Mudlark, it's now 'officially' called a Magpie-lark. But, it's also known as Peewit and Murray Magpie, depending on where you live. When we were kids, there were little wading birds on the beach at Portarlington and we called them Peeweesees, too. (Author's note: These were probably Hooded Plovers, long since gone, along with my exact memory of their appearance. A)

I'm constantly getting into 'discussions' on Facebook birding groups when the self-appointed experts rail against someone who posts a photo of a bird, calling it a seagull. 'There's no such thing as a seagull,' they screech. 'It's a silver gull.' 99% of the population know the bird as a seagull, but, the 'experts' are always right, and everyone else is wrong. However, I don't recall electing them as the 'Holder Of The Sacred Name'.

Plants have the same problem when common names prevail, which is often the case among orchid lovers. Ask a Victorian orchid hunter what a Mignonette is and she won't have a clue. Ask a Western Australian what an Onion orchid is and he won't know. But both of them will know *Microtis*, the generic name for the orchids known as mignonette or onion orchids, depending on geography. Bird orchids in Victoria are *Chiloglottis*, while in WA they are what we call plumed orchids, *Pterostylis* sp. Mosquito orchids in WA are *Cyrtostylis* – we call those Gnat orchids our Mosquitoes are *Acianthus*. And so on, *ad infinitum*. (Oooh ... Latin!)

While common names might seem easier for plants, the number and diversity of species and the immense size of the country mean that we really need to take a more 'scientific' approach if we're to achieve any clarity. It's not easy, but, if I can do it, so can you.

### VICTORIA'S FLORAL EMBLEM, is it time for a change?

The following opinion piece, by Tim Entwisle, soon-to-be retired Director and CEO of the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, appeared in *The Age* on December 26, 2022. Ed.

With the Victorian election sorted, I feel brave enough to raise the vexing matter of our inadequate state floral emblem.

First of all, can anyone actually name Victoria's floral emblem? For those of you who can't recall, it's the pink common heath. Native to south-east Australia, it's a small shrub with clusters of tube-like flowers that attract honey-eating birds.



*Epacris impressa* - Anglesea

I am not alone in thinking the common heath is an underwhelming representation of anything, let alone a whole state. Several concerned citizens – whom I'm too polite to mention here – have encouraged me to find a replacement.

It's had a good run. In 1958, Victoria became the first Australian state to adopt a floral emblem when parliament, led by then-premier Henry Bolte, proclaimed the pink form of the common heath as our totemic plant.

The common heath, *Epacris impressa*, is pretty enough but hardly impressive. On mass, in a good flowering year, the common heath will give the local scrubland a soft pink, or sometimes white or red, hue. The plant itself, though, is best described as scrappy. It's difficult to grow and almost impossible to turn into an arresting floral display – in the garden or in a vase. Line it up beside the waratah from NSW or the kangaroo paw from Western Australia, or any of the other 'emblemic' blooms, and Victoria's lacks a certain something.



***Anigozanthos manglesii* – WA floral emblem**

There is no obvious bold and beautiful plant that sums up Victoria now and its history over tens of thousands of years. A starting point might be a Victorian endemic, a species that grows only within our state border, but we have few of those. The common heath itself is equally common in Tasmania.

Some of the more recognisable and most loved plants are trees. A few months ago, I was part of an ABC Catalyst judging panel that selected the mountain ash, *Eucalyptus regnans*, as Australia's Favourite Tree. This, the world's tallest flowering plant, also grows in Tasmania, but that state is already represented by the Tasmanian blue gum, *Eucalyptus globulus*.

The river red gum, *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, was the equally worthy winner of the popular poll. It's a beautiful and personable tree, but as the most widespread tree species in Australia it would hardly highlight our south-east corner of the mainland.

A plant of significance to First Nations peoples would be timely, if perhaps odd to associate with a colonial concept of statehood. The Wurundjeri take their name from the manna gum (also called white gum) – *Wurun* – and the witchetty grub found in the tree (*djeri*).

The tree is often part of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung smoking ceremony as part of a Welcome to Country.

The manna gum too is widespread, although only in south-eastern Australian states. There are local variants only found in Victoria, but these are hardly household names or particularly distinctive. Still, the species itself should be on any short list.

For a plant with a more flamboyant and well-known flower we could look to our heathlands, to species of grevillea, correa or even a native ground orchid such as caladenia. But none would be immediately recognisable or compete, I think, with the waratah or kangaroo paw. My current favourite is a banksia of some kind. I'd suggest the silver banksia, *Banksia marginata*, a tough, nuggety plant with pale yellow flowers in a bold flower head. Not a show-off flower like the Telopea but something with a deeper, lasting beauty.



***Banksia marginata*, Angelsea**

No other state has been bold enough to adopt a banksia, so we could seize the opportunity to claim its magnificent flowerhead. Like the manna gum, its distribution gathers up part of NSW and South Australia, and it extends into Tasmania, but it is widespread in Victoria. It's worth noting that South Australia has the stunning Sturt's desert pea, which occurs in every mainland state except Victoria.

The only problem might be its name. The scientific and English common names honour Joseph Banks, one of the first European botanists to gather plants from Australia and a strong advocate for Australia becoming a penal colony.

The decolonising of plant and animal names in science is a work in progress but we could sidestep this issue by seeking permission to use a First Nations name such as Woorike, which I understand is from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung language.

That's the best I can offer, but I'm happy to receive suggestions. Keep in mind, I've been trying for more than a decade to rid Australia of the ill-fitting four seasons it inherited from overseas, and to move Wattle Day a month earlier.

And I do acknowledge there are more pressing issues for the incoming government than its floral emblem. Still, I thought we might all enjoy the distraction.

**SPEAKERS for 2023**

If you know of anyone who might make an interesting speaker for our 2023 meetings, please let us know. If you'd like to do a small presentation yourself, we'd love to hear it. Or if you have a topic you'd like to have covered, please let us know and we'll see if we can find someone to talk about it. Thanks