



Correa Mail

Newsletter No 391 - May, 2023

APRIL MEETING

Lal Lal Revegetation

Our April speaker was Susan Meyer, who spoke to us about her mission to re-establish native vegetation on a former sand-mine in Lal Lal, south-east of Ballarat.

Susan's father bought the property in 1986 as a business venture, Knight's Sand Mine. A considerable amount of sand was removed from the site to provide mortar for a majority of the houses in Ballarat and surrounds. Kaolin clay, iron ore and brown coal were also historically mined in the area.



When the property was purchased, Susan's memories are of well-treed hills ... gone now because of the mining. *Radiata* pines were planted many years ago and now dominate parts of the property. Mining ceased in 1996.

Susan is systematically removing the pines, but leaving the fallen trees in situ as potential habitat for native animals. Trimming of dangerous limbs on native trees has been undertaken, sometimes with a little more vigour than she had hoped. Disappointingly, a couple of large trees were removed rather than just trimmed.

Susan's mother was an environmentalist and registered the land as a Land For Wildlife property. She put in a large dam which is the only water-source on the property.



Weeds like blackberry and gorse were a real problem but with some government assistance these are now (mostly) under control.

Susan is monitoring the plants which are coming up in areas where pines and bracken have been cleared, and is keen to remove other weeds such as Spanish Heath, which is widespread over the property.

She is also planting natives, not necessarily indigenous, but plants which will grow well in the sandy conditions and provide some colour and diversity.

Susan's aim is to maintain the block as a whole, to get her grandchildren involved, and to continue to provide a wildlife haven and corridor perhaps in conjunction Bush Heritage Australia.

ON THE TABLE -

with Ade Foster

I undertook bit of a multi-tasking at this meeting. Normally, I'm feverishly writing notes for this section of the newsletter, while one of the more knowledgeable members does the presentation. With some trepidation and the assistance of a voice recorder I was able to skip the former and take on the latter.

It was a sparse table with few offerings, a situation reflected in the gardens of our members. There's just not much in flower at the moment. We started with the Grevilleas, where I was most comfortable. I normally

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have lots of these in flower, but the very wet Spring and Summer has seen quite a few of my 'old reliables' gone to God. *Grevillea 'Sylvia'* however continues to flower and always has some colour. At 3m x 4m it's probably in need of a serious prune, but I can't bring myself to do it while it's flowering.



***Grevillea 'Sylvia'* – 20/4/2023**

Grevillea bipinnatifida is a plant with variable leaves and is grown in many forms. It is perhaps better known as the parent plant of many of the 'Queensland hybrids'. *Grevillea Georgiana* is, in my opinion, the most beautiful of the *Grevillea* flowers with its deep pink and white flowers. It is a very prickly plant that is a nightmare to weed under.

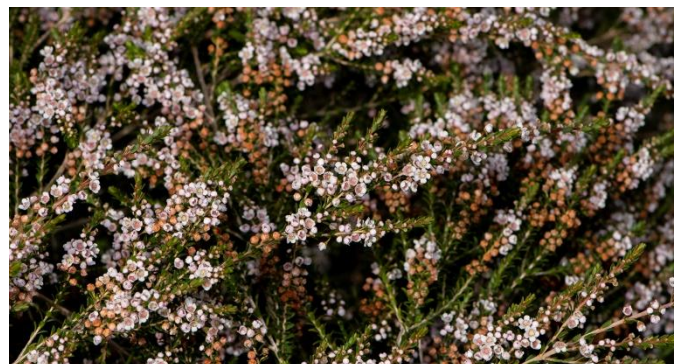


***Grevillea georgiana* – Photo: Frank Scheelings**

Grevillea tenuiloba is generally grown as a standard and is a remarkable plant with sharp, deeply divided leaves and brilliant orange, pendulous flowers. *G. plurijuga* is another plant often grown as a standard with long purplish flowers. *G. leptobotrys* is generally a small, mounded plant with many forms. It may be

completely prostrate or spreading to about 3m. See the Plant of the Month article below.

Thryptomenes were well represented, most of the purple or mauve, with one delicate pale pink and white – *T. saxicola* 'F.C. Payne'. The foliage of *T. denticulata* has a strong minty smell, reminiscent of the *Prostantheras*.



***Thryptomene saxicola* 'F.C. Payne'**

Beaufortia squarrosa is a small shrub to about 1.5m with tightly arranged oval shaped leaves and open bottle-brush flowers of a most delicate shade of red. They are found in the sandy areas of south west WA, and prefer a climate with low humidity.

Banksias will always feature on our table while Matt Leach attends the meetings. *B. lanata* is a small shrub from south or Perth. Leaves are densely packed and the spherical flowers of this specimen were creamy brown with deep purple styles. *B. burdettii* is a shrub or small tree to 4m or so. It has long, serrated leaves and upright inflorescences of orange and white. It is found in the Eneabba region north of Perth.



Banksia burdettii
***Banksia burdettii* – Photo Matt Leach**

B. occidentalis is a small shrub to small tree from swampy areas where water will accumulate along the south coast of WA. It has lovely gold flowers with deep red styles. *B. media* is a largish, very hardy shrub to about 4m with long cylindrical flower spikes of a deep gold. This specimen was paler and had a very (to me)

unpleasant, mousy smell. *B spinulosa* is a common garden plant with many varieties. It is attractive and flowers profusely producing many golden flower spikes.

One unusual plant was *Seigfriedia darwinioides*, a monotypic plant from the southern coast of WA. It is named after Siegfried, a German mythical hero who wore a magical cloak which made him invisible, referring to the flowers being hidden by the decorative bracts.



Seigfriedia darwinioides

Photo: Geographe Community Landcare Nursery

PLANT of the MONTH

Grevillea leptobotrys

Once again, we forgot to choose a 'Plant of the Month' so again, I've exercised my executive position and chosen *Grevillea leptobotrys*, brought along by Dianne Royce.



Grevillea leptobotrys – the form Dianne brought

Grevillea leptobotrys is an extremely variable plant, both in habit and in leaf form. It may be a low, sprawling shrub to about 0.5m or fully prostrate spreading to 3m or more. It has flat, much divided,

grey-green leaves deeply divided into triangular lobes with extremely sharp tips. However, they may be long and narrow on extended pedicels or short and broad forming a tangled mat.

Its native habitat is the south west of Western Australia where it grows on sandy, gravelly or loamy soils on laterite or granite. It likes hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters, but doesn't do well away from WA on its own roots. Most are grafted onto a hardier rootstock like *G. robusta*. They prefer dappled shade, protected from wind, harsh sun and frosts, to which they are particularly susceptible. They like moist but not wet soil.



Grevillea leptobotrys – the form in Ade's garden

The lovely little pink/mauve flowers are on racemes at the end of the branches and occur in late spring and summer, although there seems to be some flowers all year round.

EXCURSION REPORT -

Lal Lal Land Recovery

Following Susan's talk to the April meeting a small group of members ventured to Lal Lal to see the property for ourselves. After a coffee and toilet stop in Meredith we met with Susan and three of her friends in Lal Lal for a very enjoyable couple of hours.



The group with Susan under some of the remnant Eucalypts and introduced pines.

There were large colonies, carpets, of Nodding Greenhoods, *Pterostylis nutans*, wherever we walked. The predominant canopy trees are Manna Gum, *Eucalyptus viminalis* and Messmate, *E. obliqua*. The understory is mostly Acacia – Blackwood, Silver and Black Wattles, *A. melanoxylon*, *dealbata* and *mearnsii*. There were large numbers of very healthy Cherry Ballart, *Exocarpus cupressiformis*.

Susan has been slowly removing numbers of introduced Monterey Pine, *Pinus radiata*, and the cleared areas are very quickly showing regeneration of remnant native vegetation. We spent much time looking at tiny emergent plants, trying to identify the 'goodies' from the 'baddies'. Spanish heath, *Erica lusitanica*, is very common weed, but there were *Leptospermum*, *Cassinia* and *Cotula* among many others, which was wonderful to see.



Self-seeded and regenerating Eucalypts

The block was a wonderland of fungi, and the Fly Agaric, *Amanita muscaria*, was commonly associated with the pines. There were large numbers of Boletes, Russulas and Coral fungi. There were numbers of interesting flies on the Boletes, Fungus flies,, whose maggots feed on the meaty flesh of the fungi.



Fungus fly, *Tapeigaster sp?*, on a bolete

We also heard a number of frog species calling in and around the dam including Common Froglet, *Crinia signifera*, Victoria Smooth Froglet, *Geocrinia victoriana* and Ewing's Treefrog, *Litoria ewingii*.

We left Susan about 1.30 and drove to Elaine, where we were invited for lunch with Gladys and John Hastie. After a delicious repast of home-made vegetable soup,

sausage rolls, scones and an amazing Aniseed Myrtle chocolate cake, we wandered their garden for an hour, enjoying an interesting collection of plants.



Fly Agaric, *Amanita muscaria* – Gnome homes

Our thanks goes to Susan, Gladys and John for their hospitality, making for a most enjoyable outing.

2023 MEETINGS and OUTINGS

May meeting	Fiona Murdoch – Mallee Conservation
June Meeting	Theo Kellegooris – Natives Landscaping
July Meeting	Kellee Reissinger – Geelong BG
July 23 or 26	Follow up excursion to Geelong BG
Aug meeting	AGM and Photo Competition
Sept meeting	Marie Goodes – Little Desert Flora
Sept /Oct ??	Proposed Little Desert Weekend
Oct Meeting	Jason Caruso –Eucs for small gardens
Nov meeting	Miriam Ford – National Flora Conference.

PLANT SALE 2023

Once again, our Plant Sale was a great success. Thanks to the hardy few who helped out during the day and who make our sale the 'go to' native plant sale on the Victorian calendar.



We had a very steady stream of buyers through the gates and great reports from all our growers. While it was not as well attended as last year – the most intense sale we’ve ever held – we still made a handsome profit of more than \$1800.

The Committee has had discussions about the direction of the sale in future. It is a big job, taken on by very few members, none of whom is getting any younger. Perhaps we cease to run the canteen/BBQ and have Lions Club or similar group take on that task, leaving our members to wander, chat and promote native plants. This, after all, is our purpose. We’ll let you know what we decide.

MAY SPEAKER via ZOOM

Fiona Murdoch – Mallee Conservation

Our May meeting will be addressed, *probably* via ZOOM, by Fiona Murdoch from Mallee Conservation. Fiona and her husband Phil, are undertaking an impressive program on their 490 Ha property ‘Raakajlim’, at Colignan on the northern border of Hattah Kulkynie.

Their aim is to build a wider appreciation of the plants, animals and habitat of the Mallee of northwest Victoria through a digital presence, and by providing volunteering opportunities and citizen science projects.

The Mallee Conservation website and Fiona’s blog are a goldmine of great stories and photos of this amazing project. I urge you all to have a look, be inspired and join Fiona for her talk on May 16th.

<https://www.malleeconservation.com.au/>



Triodia at Raakajlim – Photo: Mallee Conservation

We’ll let you know if this talk will be via Zoom or in the meeting room.

WORKING BEE

Date to be confirmed

Di Royce and her daughter, Belinda, have been looking after the gardens at Northern Bay College, in Corio, recently. The company previously contracted to the job has gone belly-up and so Di and Belinda have stepped up to the plate.

Your committee has made a donation to assist and suitable plants were purchased at the plant sale. The school’s preference is for fast growing, shady trees to improve the amenity and bio-diversity of the school grounds. Matt Leach helped choose a variety of plants that meet those criteria.

We will be taking part in a working bee to help prepare the area and plant the trees, and perhaps some weeding and general tidying up.

This will be a date yet to be decided and we will keep you posted. If you take part, you will need a current ‘Working With Children’ check. These are free for volunteers, and can be arranged online here ...

<https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>

Stay tuned for a date.

TEMPORARY EDITOR

May / June

Penny and I are travelling to England for a nephew’s wedding and then to Finland to visit with our son. So, we will be away for the May and June Meetings.

Sadly, no offers of assistance were received and so it has been decided not to produce a newsletter during that time. Our secretary, Peter, will communicate any important matters via email.

Anyone who wishes to write up the speakers’ talks for those two meetings could email me the results to facilitate the first newsletter on our return. Any help here, or with articles for inclusion would be most gratefully received.

MEMBERSHIP

If you’ve forgotten to renew your membership, we’d love to have you back in the APS Geelong fold. Membership forms are on our website at ...

http://www.apsgeelong.org/Memberships%20Form%202022_23.pdf