



Correa Mail

Newsletter No 403 - July, 2024

JUNE MEETING - BATS with Grant Baverstock

Grant Baverstock was our June speaker and he talked to us about bats. As a young man Grant was a keen birder, and with mate Laurie Conole, would often go spot-lighting for owls. They noticed bats flitting around and wanted to know more about them

They applied for a Wildlife Research Permit from the then Forests Commission to trap mammals and began a mammal survey of the newly gazetted Angahook/Lorne Forest Park. And so began a forty-five year interest in bats.



Yellow-bellied Glider, Otways – Image: R. Whitford

Not a lot of research was being done in bats at the time and their work was soon noticed. They were invited to a conference in Darwin to present a paper and joined a field trip to Pine Creek. A whole new world was opened up to them. For two weeks they watched, tracked and trapped bats using state of the art

equipment. And here, Grant met his favourite bat, the ghost bat, one of only two carnivorous bats in Australia. In this part of the country most bats roost in caves, where in the south, most use hollow trees.



Ghost Bat – Image: B. Thompson

The Geelong region has a rich and varied bat fauna. There are 18 of the 80 Australian species recorded here:

- 2 species of flying foxes – *Pteropodidae*
- 1 species of sheath-tail bat – *Emballonuridae*
- 3 species of free-tail bat – *Molossidae*
- 12 species of enclosed tail bats – *Vespertilionidae*

The most obvious is the Grey-headed Flying Fox, which has a large camp in the Eastern Gardens. They are listed as “Vulnerable” under the Environment and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 and “Threatened” under Flora & Fauna Guarantee Act

Flying foxes need to travel great distance in search of food and may travel 40km from camp, visiting as many as 60 trees in a night.

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They feed on fruit, blossom, pollen/nectar and leaves, and so are critically important in pollination of our forests, carrying pollen from tree to tree on their fur.



Grey-headed Flying Foxes in Easter Gardens

They leave the camp to forage 10-45 minutes after sunset and return in the early hours of morning. Mating season is usually from March to late April, with the young born in September-October. The mother will carry young for 6 weeks, clinging to her nipple and fur. When they are too big to be carried, they are left in 'crèches' at night, usually during December-January.

Apart from the vagrant Little Red Flying Fox, the rest of our bat fauna are the 'micro-bats'.



Little Red Flying Fox – Carnarvon Gorge

Most of the micro bats are tiny, weighing between 6 and 20 grams. Micro bats are insectivorous, with three distinct methods or 'Guilds' to catch food:

The Aerial Intercept Guild, with long fast direct flight; the Aerial Pursuit Guild, with quick manoeuvrable

flight and the Gleaning Guild, with a slow fluttering flight.

Generally speaking, larger the microbat larger the prey they seek. These little bats may eat half their body weight per night, which might equate to around 500 mosquitoes per hour. They utilize different areas of the forest, depending on their method of feeding. Some 'hawk' just above the surface of water, some flit through the undergrowth. Others use the tree canopies and fly above the canopy in search of prey.

All the microbats use echo-location to find their prey. Ultrasonic signals are sent out by the bat, which detects the sound as it is reflected from objects ahead. Unbelievably they can detect their own 'voice' among thousands of others and navigate in total darkness.

We have three species of Freetail Bat in the Geelong region ... the Eastern, the Southern and the White-striped. All have exposed rat-like tails that enable them to scramble over the ground in search of prey.



White-striped Freetail Bat – Image: T. Reardon

The White-striped Freetail Bat is the only one in our region that makes calls low enough to be detected by the human ear. You may, if your hearing is good enough, here them piping around the street lights.

The Enclosed tail Bats make up the majority of the bats found in our region. The Chocolate and Gould's Wattle Bats are found throughout the region wherever there is suitable habitat.



Gould's Wattle Bat – Photo: T. Reardon

The Eastern Falsistrelle is probably found throughout Belmont, Newtown and Highton along the Barwon River, but is also found in remnant patches of woodland. It seems that large, continuous forests are not necessary for this species.

There are two species of Bent-wing Bats. The Southern Bent-wing is well known for the colony in the caves at Naracoorte, but its numbers are falling and it is critically endangered. There are also colonies at Warnambool, near Camperdown and along the Great Ocean Road.



Southern Bent-wing Bats – Photo: T. Reardon

There are two species of Long-eared Bats – Lesser and Gould's. The Lesser would be common in every back-yard around Geelong, where the Gould's prefer the wet forests of the Otways. There are also three species of Forest Bat – Large, Southern and Little. The Large-footed Myotis is the only bat in our region that gleans insects from the surface of water, flying low and scooping them up with large, well-clawed feet.

The Yellow-bellied Sheath-tailed Bat is our only member of the group. They fly quickly but are not very agile. They will often eat their prey on the wing.



Yellow-bellied Sheath-tailed Bat – Photo: T. Reardon

A lively Q&A followed a most interesting and informative talk. Thanks, Grant, for sharing your knowledge and passion with us.

PLANT TABLE - Various Members

Lynh Barfield: *Olearia astoloba* or Marble Daisy-bush is a grey leaved shrub, 60cm x 60cm. It is endemic to the headwaters of the Tambo River in the Marble Gully, NE Victoria, where it grows at altitude in a restricted to a 40 hectare area. The purple flowers are quite intense and stand out beautifully against the grey foliage. This plant has been flowering for months with little extra water. It is situated on the coastal Bellarine, facing west with wind and in full sun. It never minds what the conditions are.



It is encouraging to understand that the Department of Sustainability and Environment have a recovery plan underway for this species. It is highly threatened and, by all accounts, there are only 1000 plants left in the wild. This mitigates in part the despair we feel when yet another species becomes vulnerable or lost. It is wonderful that we, as back yard gardeners, are doing our bit by propagating and planting some of these threatened species.



Matt Leach: As usual, Matt brought along some interesting and unusual plants. Among them were a number of hakeas – *H. 'Burrendong Beauty'*, an old favourite, *H. cinerea*, a pink form of the usually yellow flowering plant, a pale form of *H. lineata*, and a very unusual seed grown *H. laurina*, with unusually deep crimson flowers.



Matt's dark form of *Hakea laurina*

Matt also had a seed grown *Eucalyptus pleuricalis*, a mallee species from WA with lovely pale yellow flowers.



Seed grown *E. pleuricalis*

Matt's specimens also included a number of very similar plants which always give rise to a lot of speculation as to identity. *Thryptomenes*, *Baeckea*s, *Micromyrtus* and *Astus* are all very similar. (See the note in Plant of the Month.)

Chris Walker-Cook: The *Templetonia* genus is endemic to Australia. There are 12 species in all, with 3 present in Victoria. *T. retusa* is present all along the limestone coasts of WA and SA, from Shark Bay to the Yorke Peninsula, as well as further inland in the Flinders Ranges. It has been shown to be very adaptable to cultivation in the Eastern states. The one I have is a prostrate form, less than 0.5 metres in height, which is covered in bright red pea flowers throughout the autumn/winter months. Matt Baars recollected at the last meeting being impressed when he saw the prostrate form

growing on the exposed coastal cliffs near Belladonia in WA.



***Templetonia retusa* at Cable Bay. Photo: Tom Hunt**

Matt Baars: Matt noted increased flowering in his garden this year which he attributes to the fact that he's been using his drip watering system regularly. Matt's *Hakea clavata* is a large plant, some 30 years old. Matt says he can't work near it when it's flowering because of the over-powering scent. Like many plants, some find the smell attractive while others are repulsed by it. The leaves are round and quite like those of succulents, but with a short, extremely sharp terminal spike. The stem hugging flowers are pink and white.



***Hakea clavata* – Coastal Hakea – Image: Trigg Plants**

Matt also had an example of *Grevillea bipinnatifida* and a standard hybrid of *G. calliantha* x *G. asparagoides*, both flowering well with the extra water.

Deb Peeters: Deb brought along two lovely little *Correa* cultivars. *Catie Bec* is a hybrid of *C. alba* and *C. pulchella*. It is a vigorous shrub to 1m with masses of open, pink flowers. *Correa 'Snowbelle'* is a small, spreading shrub with bright white flowers over a long period from autumn to spring. She also had two *eremophilas*, *E. 'Amber Carpet'* and *E. oppositifolia 'Hardy Harry'* with large pink/white flowers.



Correa 'Catie Bec'

Tracey Hind: Tracey had two specimens – *Ptilotus macrocephalus* commonly known as featherheads, green mulla mulla or green pussytails. She also had lovely pale yellow *Conostylis aculeata*, a small, grass-like plant from the south west coastal areas of WA.



Conostylis aculeata

PLANT of the MONTH – *Micromyrtus leptocalyx*

Lynh Barfield very kindly donated pots of *Xerochrysum bracteatum* for the door prizes. The remainder were distributed to members who were grateful for Lynh's gift. Nicole Leach won the main prize and chose *Micromyrtus leptocalyx* as Plant of the month. It was brought in by Matt Leach.

Micromyrtus leptocalyx is a small, very open, spindly shrub to less than 2m. It has arching branches and very small narrow obovate leaves. The small 2-3mm yellow flowers are produced mainly June to July but there is the occasional flower throughout the year. After the main flowering period my plant is pruned back to try and force it to become bushy.



This species was first formally described in 1858 by Ferdinand von Mueller who named it *Baeckea leptocalyx*. In 1867, George Bentham transferred the species to the genus *Micromyrtus*. It is endemic to central Queensland where it grows in deeply weathered sandstone hills between Tambo and Springsure. Another *Micromyrtus* species *M. hexamera*, from near Cunnamulla, was first named as a *Thryptomene*. No wonder we have problems recognizing these very similar genera.



It is a plant that is frost and drought hardy. We have had the plant for many years, and I'm not sure where it was purchased.

JULY 16th MEETING – Ross Shepherd - BANKSIAS

Our speaker in July will be Ross Shepherd who has developed the Banksia Arboretum at Seaford. Don't miss this fascinating talk at The Ballroom, at 7.30 on July 16th.

2024 MEETINGS and OUTINGS

July Meeting	Ross Shephard – Seaford Banksia Arboretum Project
Aug Meeting	AGM & Photo Competition
Sept Meeting	TBA
Oct Meeting	RSPCA Koala Hospital
Nov Meeting	TBA
Dec 7th	Christmas Break-up BBQ

Lots more in the pipeline. Stay tuned!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The July 16th meeting will be the Annual General Meeting of Australian Plants Society – Geelong. The meeting will start at 7:30 pm at The Ballroom, Hamlyn Park.

Elections will be held for all committee positions ... President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and General Members.

We would encourage you to consider a term (or two) on the committee. It is not an onerous task and new ideas are always welcomed.

A Nomination Form and Proxy Voting Form will come with this newsletter.

PHOTO COMPETITION

Once again we'll have our legendary Photo Competition instead of a speaker at the AGM. There are three categories: Australian Plants, Australian Animals and Australian Landscapes.

Photos must be taken by you, in Australia, and have nothing which identifies the photographer. You can use your DSLR camera, your phone or your grandad's box brownie. The photos can be recent, or as old as you like. You can submit two photos in each category – a total of six entries.

Once the photos are received, they'll be uploaded to the internet and a link will be sent out so you can view them, and vote for your favourite in each category. Photos will be identified by a number only, no names.

All the photos will be shown on the big screen after the AGM and the winners announced. Prizes will be presented at the Christmas break-up in December.

Entries close 28th July and voting is from 31 July to 13 August. Please send your photos through to Bruce at bsmcginness@gmail.com If you have any problems

emailing your photos let Bruce know by email or at M: 0428439761, H: 52788827. Info about how to vote will follow.



Previous winner by Carmel Addlem

APS GEELONG MEMBERSHIPS - Don't Forget

We have introduced a new system for our membership renewals, to keep in line with APS Victoria procedures and to enable us to better keep track of our membership.

All memberships will terminate of 30th June each year, regardless of when the previous payment was made.* Membership fees will be due on July 1st every year.

* Exception: We had hoped to recruit new members at the plant sale in April, and any who sign on at the sale, or from April 1 to June 30, will have membership through to 30 June 2025.

Don't forget, if you join APS Victoria and pay your membership of APS Geelong at the same time, please email our secretary to let him know. That way, we keep you in the loop and keep our records up to date, as we are required by law to do.

Email the secretary at: apsgeelong@gmail.com

REVEGETATING SERENDIP - by Peter Nuzum

Much has been said and written about Serendip on the outskirts of Lara, particularly since the enclosed animals have been removed and their enclosures dismantled. Originally, Serendip was set up to breed rare

and endangered wildlife and did a great job, particularly with cape barren geese, brolgas, bush turkeys among others. Over the years, the number of birds and animals on display increased and Serendip became well-known for its breeding programs and displays of threatened and rare native species.



As part of the You Yangs Precinct Master Plan, Parks Victoria made the decision that they were not a zoo and so the displayed animals and birds have been removed and the enclosures dismantled. This has removed one of the main attractions that drew many thousands of people to Serendip each year. Now what are left are the free-range animals – kangaroos, wallabies, emus and water birds.



But not all is lost. We now have a “Friends of Serendip” group which is helping in redevelopment of this idyllic reserve. On a recent Saturday, a group of us attended to plant lots of indigenous plants. These plants were sourced from Newport Indigenous Nursery, Genu Nursery in South Geelong and grown on site by a small number of volunteers from seed and cuttings taken locally.

THE FUTURE

Currently, the creek near the entrance is being refurbished and its associated duck pond is being resurfaced. The main dam and bird hide are being upgraded. These will all be brought back into operation in the near future.



From a Friends perspective, we will continue planting out various areas while plants are available. We will also develop a grasslands section using the book “Plants of Melbourne’s Western Plains” as our template for plants we can grow. Sadly however, there is a problem with cats as the reserve is adjacent to residential areas and with foxes as there are also 10-acre blocks and farmlands on 3 sides of the reserve.

A BIT MORE SERENDIP INFO - Ade Foster

Some supporters of Serendip have expressed concern that Serendip’s captive animals are gone. With the help of Zoos Victoria Life Sciences Department, they have been rehoused in situations more amenable to their well-being.

The ‘zoo’ aspect of Serendip was unsustainable. It costs a lot of money to feed and care for the ‘display’ animals and to maintain their enclosures. Serendip charges the public no fee to enter.

But Serendip is not closing, merely moving in a new and exciting direction. They will continue to do great work with breeding programs for critically endangered native animals, and parkland is still for public use.

Now, with input from Zoos Victoria, they will undertake breeding programs, with the aim of releasing back into the wild, many critically endangered species.

The aim is for these programs to be as successful as that of the Eastern Barred Bandicoot. These animals

were down to fewer than 150 on mainland Australia. A captive breeding program has seen Eastern Barred Bandicoots released onto three islands in Victoria, after predators were removed. 'Wild' breeding has been so successful that the captive breeding program is no longer required, and has been wound up.



Eastern Barred Bandicoot – Photo: Zoos Victoria

So indeed, all is not lost, but a new and very exciting era is just beginning for Serendip.

EUCALYPTUS MACROCARPA – Mottlecah by Ade Foster

Not far from my house in Belmont, there is a marvellous specimen of what I think is *Eucalyptus macrocarpa*, the Mottlecah. However, it may be *E. rhodantha* or a hybrid of the two. If anyone with better Eucalyptus ID skills than me would like to make a positive identification, I can give you the address.

With its strange growth habit, silvery grey/green foliage and huge red flowers it is a real standout in the front of a suburban garden.



The tree in a Belmont garden

Eucalyptus macrocarpa was first formally described in 1842 by William Jackson Hooker from a specimen collected by James Drummond from the "guangan" (Kwongan). The specific epithet is derived from the ancient Greek words 'makros' meaning long and

'karpos' meaning fruit. The Noongar peoples know the tree as mottlecah.



The leaves of the Belmont tree.

Eucalyptus macrocarpa is an extremely variable mallee that grows anywhere from half to eight metres. It has a sprawling, spreading habit with smooth, shiny, bark. Its crown is composed of juvenile leaves without stalks, arranged in opposite pairs. They are roughly heart shaped and the bases wrap around the stem. The flowers are large, up to 75 mm across and are mostly bright pink/red. There are, rarely, creamy white flowers. Flowering can be from August to January, but may be as late as May/June



***E. macrocarpa* flowers – Image: Ruth Bancroft Nursery**

It is found growing in undulating sandy country in the south of WA around Eneabba, Cataby and Kulin. There are two recognised subspecies, with *ssp elecantha* found in a small area south of Geraldton.

It makes a very attractive and unusual plant for a largish garden. This Belmont specimen seems to be less affected by the black sooty mould that attacks the plants in our wetter more humid climate.