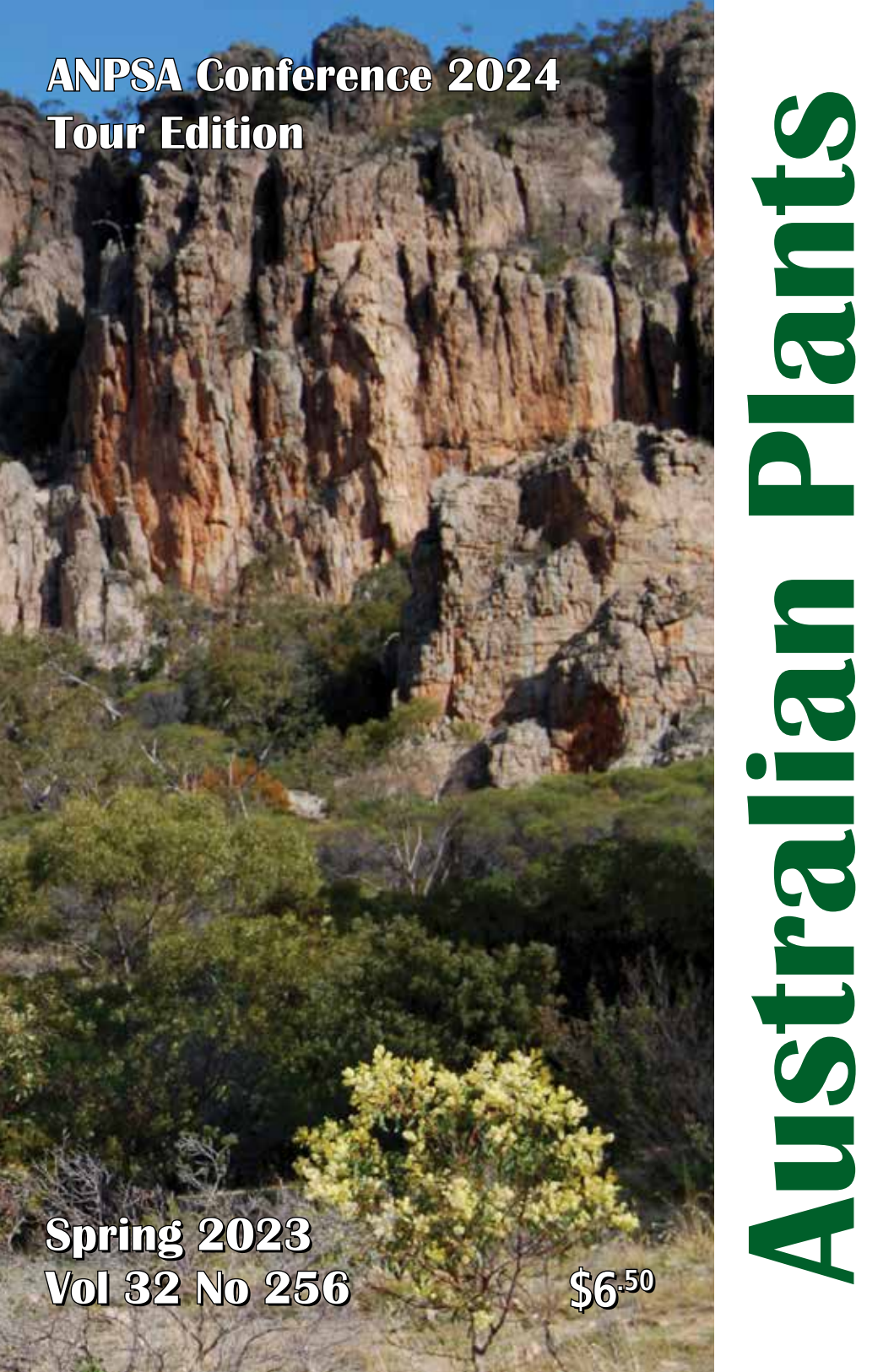




**ANPSA Conference 2024
Tour Edition**

**Spring 2023
Vol 32 No 256**

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Australian Plants

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This issue of *Australian Plants* was compiled by Maree Goods

Cover: Mount Arapiles. Neil Marriott

Australian Plants articles

Australian Plants is published quarterly to promote knowledge of Australian plants.

Editors: John Aitken and Merle Thompson OAM

Layout: Lachlan McLaine

Contributions and offers to produce an issue are welcome. Please contact:

John Aitken and Merle Thompson OAM

Editors, '*Australian Plants*'

PO Box 263, Cremorne Junction NSW 2090

E-mail office@austrplants.com.au

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Join us in Victoria for Spring 2024

Chris Clarke

Chris is past President of APS Victoria and currently Vice President of Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) (ANPSA). He is a member of the APS Keilor Plains group and has had a passion for our flora for over 50 years. He loves photography and leading field trips to wildflower hot spots.

Our next ANPSA Biennial Conference is to be held in Melbourne from Monday, 30 September to Friday, 4 October 2024. The five-day conference has a broad theme of 'Gardens for Life' and will cover such topics as gardens for wildlife, conservation of rare species through cultivation, gardens for beauty, urban gardens, soil health and gardens for our health and well-being. This edition of *Australian Plants* features key destinations for our planned six-day bus tours around Victoria. Depending on bookings and accommodation, the tours will run pre and post conference and bookings for both tours and the conference will open in early 2024. To register your expression of interest for the conference and tours: <https://apsvic.org.au/anpsa-biennial-conference-2024/> and receive regular newsletters and updates.



Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre. Miriam Ford.

Our conference venue is the Melbourne Conference and Exhibition Centre on the Yarra River which has top facilities with ready access to public transport, hotels and Air BnB accommodation. The venue is near wonderful galleries, exhibitions and the historic port area.

We have an amazing program with top presenters and on the Tuesday and Thursday excursions to wildflower hot spots, new and established botanic gardens, private gardens and parks. The five-day program will be featured in a later edition of *Australian Plants*.

Make sure that you have subscribed to receive the free newsletters via e-mail so you don't miss out on being notified about the tours. You can register and see the newsletters and a video on our APS Victoria web site here - <https://apsvic.org.au/anpsa-biennial-conference-2024/>

We are offering three tours which are covered in this edition. They are:

- **Grampians Wimmera Tour**
- includes Woorndoo grasslands, Grampians/Gariwerd National Park, Mt Arapiles, Little Desert and several private gardens.
- **Great Ocean Road Otways Tour**
- includes Kevin Hoffman Walk, Anglesea heathlands, the Otway Coast, Otways National Park, and several public and private gardens.
- **Gippsland Wilsons Promontory Tour**
- includes Wilsons Promontory, Phillip Island, Morwell National Park, Traralgon Railway Reservoir Conservation Reserve, Edward Hunter Heritage Bush Reserve – Moe and several private gardens.

The pre-conference six-day tours will depart from Melbourne on Monday 23rd September 2024, and return on Saturday 28th September. If we have sufficient bookings, these six-day tours will run again from Saturday 5 October 2024 to Thursday 10 October. At this stage tours are only open to conference participants. Transport is via coach with motel style accommodation and all meals are provided.

These will be exceptional wildflower tours with expert guides on board the buses and there will be more wildflower stops and interesting gardens than we have room to cover here.

Please share this edition with your friends, networks or whoever you think may be interested in joining us in 2024. We hope to see you there.

The Grampians Wimmera Tour

The Grampians-Wimmera tour is a wonderful opportunity to explore some of Victoria's dazzling spring wildflower displays and awe inspiring mountain panoramas. The tour visits a variety of landscapes including valuable native grasslands of the Western District; low open shrub land, heathland and sub alpine forests of the Grampians; the jagged, sandstone outcrop of Mt Arapiles; and the mallee and heathland of the Little Desert. This area is one of Victoria's richest flora regions growing over one third of its flora. It is an optimum time to visit for its spring flowers. The tour will also visit a diversity of public and private gardens, rarely open to the public. We are now going to explore some of the places the tour will visit.

Woorndoo Grasslands

John Delpratt

John is an Honorary Fellow with the University of Melbourne. He was a lecturer in plant production and seed technology at the University's Burnley campus for 25 years prior to his retirement.

Western Victoria supports some of Australia's most beautiful, rare and seasonally spectacular plant communities. The once-extensive Natural Temperate Grassland and Grassy Eucalypt Woodland communities of the Victoria Volcanic Plain (VVP) are both listed as critically endangered under the Australian Government's Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act (EPBC 1999). They are also among Australia's most florally spectacular plant communities, particularly during spring. Abundant native perennial wildflowers (forbs) dominate the remnants from mid-September to late November, at which time native grasses such as Wallaby Grass (*Rytidosperma* spp.), Spear



Native grassland in the spring. E Fenton.

Grass (*Austrostipa* spp.) and Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) take over as they flower and set seed in late spring and summer.

The rural district of Woorndoo in south-western Victoria is renowned for the beauty, diversity and abundance of its remnant native grasslands and grassy woodlands. The district straddles Salt Creek, which flows from Lake Bolac in the north to join the Hopkins River to the south. These waterways and associated lakes and wetlands are critical habitat for the Short-finned Eel (*Anguilla australis*) as they undertake their extraordinary migration to and from their breeding site in the Coral Sea, south-east of New Guinea. At Woorndoo, Salt Creek forms a geological boundary with the basalt-derived heavy clays of the VVP to the east and the sedimentary soils of the Dundas Plateau to the west. However, both soil types support a similar and diverse suite of native spring-flowering forbs with two of the very best remnants represented by the Woorndoo Common and Woorndoo Cemetery. The district is serviced by wide '3-chain' road reserves, which support the majority of the high-quality remnants in this highly modified and productive agricultural landscape. The structure and diversity of these communities can be attributed in large part to Aboriginal land management practices over millennia. More recently, a decades-long history of consistent annual



Restored native grassland.
Maree Goods.

to 3-yearly roadside burning by local Country Fire Authority (CFA) volunteer brigades has contributed to the retention of numerous more-or-less intact remnants of these important ecological communities.

While grasses are the dominant structural species, the gaps between tussocks support a rich diversity of plant life-forms. In early spring, a complex association of mosses, lichens and liverworts forms a living crust over the soil surface.

Summer-dormant perennials such as Sundews (*Drosera* sp.) and Goodenias (e.g. *Goodenia pinnatifida*) carpet the ground and the small lilies such as Early Nancy (*Wurmbea dioica*) and Tiny Stars (*Pauridia glabella*) have their moment in the sun. By late September/early October they are joined by numerous other lilies, daisies (including the recently described Basalt Billy-buttons, *Craspedia basaltica*), and a range of other colourful forbs and orchids. All in all, spring is a great time to be in the field in south-western Victoria.

The Grampians/Gariwerd

Neil Marriott

Neil is an Honorary Life Member of APS Victoria and a past President. He is currently the Conservation Officer for APS Victoria. He is also an author of several books and publications.

The Grampians in western Victoria are known as Gariwerd to our First Nations people. They are a biodiversity hotspot with over 1,300 native plant species, over one third of the entire state's flora. The Grampians were formed during the Ordovician and Silurian periods when a former large inland lake bed of deep sands and gravels was uplifted along a series of fault lines resulting in the creation of a number of steep sided ranges known as cuestas; steep cliff lines along the east, gently sloping to the west. The region then underwent much erosion and deposition of shallow to deep beds of sands and gravels surrounding the ranges.



Endemic Grampians Grey Gums
Eucalyptus alaticaulis on cliff lines.
Neil Marriott.

This has resulted in numerous habitats for plants to colonise, ranging from sub-alpine woodlands on the highest peaks, rocky ridges, tall forests, right through to open areas of heathland. There are also fern lined gullies, swamps and lakes, and many creeks and streams. Stretching from south to north for around 134km there is also a very big drop in annual rainfall from south to north. As a result the Grampians have more vegetation communities than anywhere else in Victoria.

Each of these vegetation communities supports its own, often unique flora. The Grampians, being isolated from other ranges in Victoria have developed much of its

own unique flora, with over 75 plant endemic species. These endemic plants range from tall forest trees through to small to large shrubs, herbs, grasses and sedges. For example there are at least seven endemic grevillea species, the greatest concentration of grevilleas anywhere in the state. There are also 12 endemic pea plants, many terrestrial orchids and numerous eucalyptus species. The Grampians

are also home to one of the rarest plants anywhere in Australia, the 'Grampians Resurrection-lily' *Borya mirabilis* which is only known from one tiny population covering little more than several square metres on a mountain just behind Halls Gap, the main tourist town in the Grampians.

The Myer Garden, Dunkeld

At the southern tip of the Grampians lies the small town of Dunkeld, once the centre for the local farming and logging communities. Today Dunkeld is a popular tourist town with the lovely old Royal Mail Hotel as a chief attraction. The Royal Mail is famous for its fine foods and attractive location at the foot of the Grampians mountain ranges. It also has a lovely native garden that contains numerous rare and beautiful plants. We will be staying here for the night.

The owners of the Royal Mail Hotel, Allan and Maria Myers, as well as having a superb organic kitchen garden for the hotel, have a large and wonderful, mostly native garden that we will be visiting. This garden is closed to the general public, so we are indeed most privileged to



Grampians Correa. *Correa reflexa* var. *angustifolia*. Neil Marriott.



Hakea amplexicaulis. Neil Marriott.

be allowed to visit and tour this fine garden. A unique feature of the Myer Garden is the beautiful 2 metre tall Grampians sandstone wall that surrounds the garden.

The Myers Garden has undergone a series of makeovers and landscape designs over the years. Today it is noted for its lush, sweeping green lawns dotted with ancient River Red Gums *Eucalyptus camaldulensis*, and a series of gardens featuring large collections of grevilleas, eremophilas, dryandras, hakeas and many more!



Myer Garden, Dunkeld. Neil Marriott.

'The Picaninny'

Heading north from Dunkeld we pass Mt Sturgeon and then Mt Abrupt. Both are tall and spectacular, but would take us hours to climb! So to compromise, we will be climbing The Picaninny, just north of Mt Abrupt. Despite its smaller size, The Picaninny has a great range of southern Grampians plants, so there will be lots in flower to excite our group, including the beautiful endemic Narrow-leaf Flame Grevillea, *Grevillea dimorpha* var. *angustifolia*. This wonderful low, fiery red flowered endemic shrub is confined to the southern hills of the Grampians,



and it was here, at the Picaninny that one of our local members discovered a single plant with lovely yellow flowers. Fortunately a few cuttings fell into his pocket, as the lone plant was destroyed by track widening the following year!! We will see both colours growing superbly in the Endemic Garden at Wildlife Art Museum of Australia (WAMA) Botanic Gardens.

Narrow-leaf Flame Grevillea. *Grevillea dimorpha* var. *angustifolia*. Neil Marriott.

Mt William

The highest peak in the Grampians, at just over 1,134 metres supports a rich subalpine flora, and numerous endemic species. On the very top we will see several endemic eucalypts including the beautiful Grampians Snow Gum *Eucalyptus pauciflora* subsp. *parvifructa*. We will drive to the carpark, almost at the top. Depending on our levels of energy, we will walk up the road to admire the many beautiful native plants, and the numerous native birds that live in these high country woodlands. Leaving Mt William we will drop down into the valley floor to reach the tourist capital of Halls Gap where we will stay the night.



Mt William looking towards the Serra Range. Neil Marriott.



Bent Goodenia. *Goodenia geniculata*.
Maree Goods.



Grampians Grevillea. *Grevillea confertifolia*.
Neil Marriott.

Wildlife Art Museum of Australia (WAMA)

Nestled at the foot of the mountains just outside Halls Gap is the wonderfully diverse WAMA property. This will be the site for the Wildlife Art Museum of Australia, with a dedicated world class gallery featuring all forms of wildlife art, a beautiful Australian native botanic garden, areas of natural Grampians heathy woodland and wetlands.



Grevillea gariwerdensis growing in the WAMA
covenanted woodland. Neil Marriott.

Of note for this tour will be the inspection of the Grampians Endemic Garden, which contains a very large collection of unique Grampians plants. The long term aim is to hold the complete collection of all 77 Grampians endemic plants, as well as a broad range of all the genetic diversity of this endemic flora. Not yet open to the general public, this will be a wonderful opportunity to see this garden in its early stages of development.



Redgum wetlands at WAMA. Neil Marriott.

Grannes Garden

In 1995, Glenda and Greg Lewin purchased 50 acres of farming land (formerly the Stawell Airport). Ten acres of this was rabbit proofed in preparation for their permanent home and garden. In 1996, the first native trees were planted randomly on the site and these are the mature trees on the property today. Their home was built in 2001 and the immediate surrounding gardens were planted. The original garden design was the work of Barb Reading who believed the garden should reflect the iconic Australian design of the house. In that design, Glenda and Greg wanted to incorporate natural stone and steel with the addition of sculptural features to enhance. Barb sought to create a garden that combined plantings of endemic Grampians natives together with the more exotic WA gems. The beauty of her work was through her artistic eye – bringing perspective, subtlety, simplicity and colour through the combination of plants used.



Grannes Garden. Glenda Lewin.

Marriott Garden 'Panrock Ridge'

Panrock Ridge is the home to the Plant Trust Australia official Grevillea Collection, with over 330 species and subspecies under cultivation. Panrock Ridge is in the foothills of the Black Range, a large granite intrusion just to the east of the Grampians. As well as the Grevillea Collection, there is also a very extensive collection of hakea (over 165



Panrock Ridge garden. Neil Marriott.



Panrock Ridge garden. Neil Marriott.

species), a large Mallee eucalypt garden, Acacia garden, rainforest gully and much more. The gardens are designed primarily for wildlife with over 180 native birds being recorded for the property as well as numerous native animals and reptiles.



Grevilleas growing at Panrock Ridge garden. Neil Marriott.

Wartook Gardens

Royce Raleigh

Royce is an Honorary Life Member of APS Victoria and Wimmera Growers of Australian Plants. He is a past president of APS Victoria.

When Jeanne and Royce Raleigh moved from Melbourne to Wartook at the end of 1974, they had always planned to develop a large native garden. Their aim was to show the public that there are many beautiful Australian plants that can be grown, but generally not available in nurseries. The garden, initially 100 square metres, now covers five acres. Over the years they have overcome waterlogging, droughts and bush fire. A 2.4m high fence was built to keep out rabbits, emus and kangaroos. Their garden is always evolving and is like a botanical garden showcasing plants from all over Australia such as *Dampiera*, *Lechenaultia*, *Hakea*, *Verticordia*, *Eremaea*, *Beaufortia* and *Eucalyptus* among others.



Wartook Gardens.
Royce Raleigh.



Wartook Gardens. Royce Raleigh.

Brouwer Garden

Maree Goods

Maree Goods is an Honorary Life Member of the Wimmera Growers of Australian Plants and is a co-author of the book, *Birds and Plants of the Little Desert*.

Mabel Brouwer and her husband, JanBert, purchased their one hectare property in January 2015. The back of their property adjoins Burnt Creek and features a natural stand of old growth *Eucalyptus largiflorens* (Black Box). JanBert had a great vision for their garden. He designed a series of garden beds separated by meandering paths. The building of their dream home commenced in February 2016 and they moved in just prior to Christmas 2016. Unfortunately JanBert never saw the fruits of his vision as he passed away suddenly shortly after they moved into their new home. It was only through Mabel's determination and with the help of her many friends she was able to carry out JanBert's vision. Mabel loves the garden but does not consider herself a gardener; more of a collector of plants. However she does have an eye for detail, shape, colour and texture and this is obvious throughout the garden. Mabel's dream of proving to the residents of Horsham that you can have a native garden on Horsham soil is now a reality.



Brouwer Garden. Mabel Brouwer.

Horsham Church of Christ Garden

The Horsham Church of Christ and surrounds cover four industrial blocks. Several years before the opening of the Church in April 2018, the southern and part of the western boundaries were planted out in windbreak trees and shrubs. A small team of people worked tirelessly to develop and prepare the garden beds which were then mostly planted out with a variety of natives in time for the opening of the Church. The aim of the garden is to be a welcoming, peaceful and happy place.



Horsham Church of Christ Garden. Maree Goods.

Mount Arapiles

Mount Arapiles is a spectacular rock formation that rises about 140 metres from the surrounding Wimmera Plains. Mount Arapiles is widely regarded as a world renowned climbing area for rock climbers. The Mount has been preserved for its diversity of flora totalling nearly 500 species including an endemic mint bush, *Prostanthera arapilensis*; the rare and endangered species rock wattle, *Acacia rupicola*; and the skeleton fork fern, *Psilotum nudum*. Mt Arapiles is covered in low, open forest of box and



Thelymitra ixioides. Maree Goods.



Mount Arapiles. Graham Goods.

yellow-gum, *Eucalyptus microcarpa* and *Eucalyptus leucoxylon*; buloke, *Allocasuarina luehmannii*; and white cypress pine, *Callitris glaucophylla*.

The tour will drive to the summit where there is a relative easy walk of about 50 metres to a few steps to climb the lookout. From here you can see the Grampians and the Wimmera Plains with paddocks of all shapes, sizes and colours, and the various ephemeral lakes.

There are pockets around the base of the Mt Arapiles which tour attendees will be able to explore to see the diversity of the plants and orchids that grow in the Park.



Stenanthera conostephioides.
Maree Goods.



Prostanthera arapilensis. Maree Goods.



Prostanthera rotundifolia.
Graham Goods.

Little Desert

The Little Desert is a national icon that doesn't live up to its name but is well covered with vegetation and can be very floriferous from late winter through to midsummer. It is bordered by the South Australian/Victorian border in the west and the Wimmera River in the east making it about 90 kilometres long and approximately 20 kilometres wide. It is mainly undisturbed by human activity even though there was some



Phebalium stenophyllum. Graham Goods.

grazing from the 1850s through to the early 1960s. The Little Desert is relatively weed-free which makes it all the more inviting to explore. The tour will visit the southern boundary of the eastern block which consists of desert stringybark, *Eucalyptus arenacea* and mallee woodland with a mid storey of various shrubs, herbaceous ground covers and a variety of orchids.

Some of the understorey plants are *Calytrix tetragona*, *Phebalium stenophylla*, *Correa reflexa* subsp. *scabridula*, the endangered species of *Zieria veronicea* and several other species.



Zieria veronicea. Maree Goods.

Great Ocean Road Otways Tour

Miriam Ford

Miriam grew up in Queensland and attended the University in Brisbane before going to London where she furthered her training as a research scientist. After her return to Australia she settled in Melbourne where she worked for 20 years in research before retiring to grow plants and a large Australian garden. She joined APS in 1996 and has served in committee and executive roles in her district group, APS Yarra Yarra. She is the current President of APS Vic.

Introduction

I vividly recall my first trip down the Great Ocean Road. I had just returned from the grey rainy skies and closed in spaces of London. Going through Geelong (no bypass at that time) then onto Anglesea the world opened up into a vast bright blue of sea and sky stretching as far as the eye could see. Then on through the lush green tree ferns and tall trees of the Otways (that section of the road was still unsealed then) to Port Campbell via the Twelve Apostles. One never ever tires of the views or the uplift it gives the spirit when travelling this part of coastal Victoria. On those first trips I was more interested in the beach and showing my UK visitors the sights. Now I have seen the light and you will too when you take this tour.

In developing the selection of pre and post tours for the ANPSA 2024 conference APS Vic has sought to achieve a good balance between cultivated walks and gardens and experiences in many and varied wild places. This tour does that well. On leaving Melbourne the first stop is the Kevin Hoffman walk, a lovely cultivated garden where Beverly Hoffman herself will tell the history.



Kevin Hoffman Walk. Graham Goods.

Wild heathland walks follow at Point Addis and Anglesea where the ANGAIK Society guides tell us about their love of the flora and fauna in the region and their efforts to protect and preserve it. We visit Sunnymede, a much-awarded landscaped garden by Peter Shaw then a series of curated easy-going walks follow, coastal and hinterland, river and forest enroute to and within the Otways. Ever onward with more extraordinary ocean views and visits, the iconic Twelve Apostles amongst others, to the Swan Reserve and Gardens of the Warrnambool area. Once again extraordinary gardens that remind us of the dedication and passion of their creators seeking to preserve, protect and inspire others to become more like-minded or simply to relax and enjoy the beauty offered. Back to Melbourne via the Kennedy Garden, a collection of hakeas and banksias to delight the senses and the twitchers amongst you. Thank you to the collection of writers who have penned the information and the photographers whose lovely images grace the descriptions of the places and plants visited on this tour.

Kevin Hoffman Walk, Lara

Nicky Zanen

Nicky has been a member of the SGAP/Australian Plants Society for nearly 40 years and has been on the organising committee for two ASGAP Conferences. Nicky is a keen traveller and loves exploring all the corners of Australia, and has a wide interest in natural history and bird watching.



Correa sp. Kevin Hoffman Walk.
Nicky Zanen.

In a quiet street in Lara, a township between Geelong and Melbourne, is an example of what one could term a verge garden. Established some fifty years ago, this garden has grown into the Kevin Hoffman Walk and epitomizes the passion of an Australian native plant enthusiast who is leaving a legacy for the future. It isn't large, the Kevin Hoffman walk is 700 metres long and at its widest point is 40 metres wide, along Hovells Creek.

The older garden has a large range of Western Australian plants and more recently an indigenous garden was added. The indigenous plantings include plants that were

or are still naturally found in and around the You Yangs, Werribee Plains, Brisbane Ranges and the Western Volcanic Plains areas. All of these areas have fairly low annual rainfall totals so the plants need to survive without irrigation.

Soon after the Hoffmans moved into the area, Kevin started beautifying the area opposite his home in Wingara Drive, and then approached the Corio Shire for supplies. In late 2013 the Friends Group was established as a support group in terms of volunteering physical maintenance of the walk as well as applying for grants and to undertake any works required. An expert gardening contractor is employed one day a week to assist with maintenance and plant selection.



Kevin Hoffman Walk. Nicky Zanen.

In 1982 Wingara Drive was awarded an outstanding streetscape by then Victorian Premier, John Cain. At the same time David Martin, a student landscape architect at the University of Canberra, won an international design award for his "Landscape Masterplan" which encompassed the Kevin Hoffman Walk as well as the open space and wetlands opposite known as 'The Duck Ponds'. This was implemented in 1983 by the Shire of Corio as part of its flood prevention program to protect central Lara. They used locally grown River Red Gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) as well as other indigenous plants along the creek edges. In 2022 David Martin was acknowledged in a Community Contribution Award from the Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) Victoria given to Hovells Creek Linear Park/Kevin Hoffman Walk.

Members may have visited these gardens before, but they are well worth a visit again. With the borrowed landscapes one can be in the middle of the country, pop in to a small fern gully or admire the vast array of Aussie plants.

Point Addis

Gail Slykhuis

Gail grew up in Anglesea and always had a love for the bush. After a rewarding horticultural teaching career within the TAFE sector, she returned to Anglesea and it was a natural move to become involved in ANGAIK.

Point Addis and surrounds, located at the most easterly part of the Great Otway National Park, have much to offer a natural history enthusiast. Many of Point Addis's features are also of extreme significance to the Wadawurrung, the traditional owners of the land.



Looking towards Point Addis from Southside. Peter Brighton.

Views across Bass Strait, often sporting Australasian Gannets as they dive for a feed, expansive beaches bordered by high cliffs, stunning heathland, and the proximity to world renowned surfing site, Bells Beach, collectively provide the character of this special area.

The real wow factor begins as you walk the tracks. It is here you appreciate the rich plant diversity of a heathland and the wildlife it supports. Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Swamp Wallabies and Short-beaked Echidnas can be encountered together with amazing birdlife including the endangered Eastern Rufous Bristlebird.

Contributing to the significance of the area are several plant species that are listed under the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988:

Eucalyptus littoralis, Anglesea Grey Gum

Olearia pannosa subsp. *cardiophylla*, Velvet Daisy-bush

Prostanthera nivea var. *nivea*, Snowy Mint-bush

Thomasia petalocalyx, Paper Flower



Olearia pannosa subsp. *cardiophylla*. Velvet Daisy-bush. Margaret MacDonald.

Anglesea Heathland

Christine Morrissey

Christine has loved flowers and nature from a very early age. When they moved into their beach house in Anglesea, she wanted to know about the plants in the area, so she joined ANGAIK - Anglesea and Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna.

The Anglesea heathland is one of the few remnant heathlands remaining in South West Victoria, and is different from all others. The naturally sculpted tapestry of mostly low-growing plants provide a haven and food source for numerous birds, mammals, insects and reptiles.

The shy Rufous Bristlebird is more often heard than seen as it runs swiftly through the undergrowth. It is one of the special birds of the area because of its restricted distribution.

Anglesea and Aireys Inlet are home to more than 110 orchids (and some recognised hybrids), most of which grow in the heathland. There are three endemic species (which grow nowhere else). All are listed as rare or vulnerable at both a state and national level.

Pterostylis unicornis (previously called *Pterostylis* sp. aff. *plumosa*) the Unicorn Bearded Orchid, was renamed recently. Bearded orchids are widespread in Victoria but this is different from those in other areas, having a long beak and a brown or green knob on the end of the long, hairy labellum.



Rufous Bristlebird. Graham Goods.

Caladenia maritima, the Angahook Fingers, was discovered in 1998 by local orchid expert Margaret MacDonald. It grows in only one area of the heathland; a white spider orchid with reddish markings.

A third orchid, endemic to the area is *Prasophyllum odoratum*, the Anglesea Leek Orchid, recognised as being a separate member of the Scented Leek Orchid group. The sweetly scented green and brown flowers have a long, white labellum with wavy edges.



Prasophyllum odoratum, the Anglesea Leek. Margaret MacDonald.



Grevillea infecunda. Anglesea Grevillea. Margaret MacDonald.

Another endemic plant, registered as vulnerable at both state and national level is the *Grevillea infecunda*, the Anglesea Grevillea. This low-growing plant exhibits a wide variation in leaf size and shape, and in the intensity of the colour of the flowers. It does not produce seeds but reproduces by root suckers.

In Spring, the heathland is awash with colour; the yellow of the wattles, the orange/yellow of numerous pea plants, the white of the everlasting daisies and scatterings of various pinks, reds and blues.

Sunnymeade - Garden of Peter and Simone Shaw

Peter Shaw

Peter is a professional landscape designer. He and his wife, Simone, run Ocean Road Landscaping. Peter is the author of the book, Soulscape.

Peter and Simone Shaw purchased their block in 2000. There were twisted stringy barks (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) that gracefully stood on the site and evoked a sense of magic that influenced their garden on all levels. The house was built at the end of the block enabling all the trees to stay just as they were. The free-form design reflected the natural twisting shapes in the trunks and worked its way under the trees. The trees provided an opportunity for children's play and cubby houses, adding to the childhood magic that was created. The plants selected for under the trees needed to be tough and drought tolerant. Once they worked out what would grow, they simply repeated the patterns. In 2014 Sunnymeade won the Victorian Landscape Awards - Plants in Landscape



Sunnymeade, Anglesea Garden of Peter and Simone Shaw. S Griffiths.

The Lorne Foreshore - Lorne Coastal Walk (aka Doug Stirling Walk)

Miriam Ford

This is a spectacular and very easy going walk on gravel paths and boardwalks. It goes for 1 km from the Lorne Surf Lifesaving club to the Lorne Pier. You take in the sweeping coastal views looking back towards Lorne and the surf coast to Anglesea, watch the surfers catching the break if the weather is right and take in views of the Pier where the road



Lorne Coast Walk. Miriam Ford.

out of town heads to Apollo Bay. Many of you will be familiar with the famous Lorne Pier to Pub swim which takes place here in January each year. On the foreshore, there are impressive majestic stands of *Eucalyptus globulus* (Blue Gum) where the juvenile foliage is often in evidence and also thickets of *Melaleuca lanceolata* (Moonah)

with several other small dense shrubs that the little birds love. You will hear them twittering and darting about. You arrive at the new Lorne Pier with the option to walk out to the end and can also take the opportunity to look and read the Shipwreck Plaques on the section of the Old Pier that remains. There is lots of history and beauty to be enjoyed here. You can return along the beach which is an easy walk too and lets you check out the rocky foreshore and wave action on the rock ledges more closely.

Kennett River Walk

Trevor Blake

Trevor is an Honorary Life Member of APS Maroondah Group; author, illustrator of a number of books on Australian Plants including 9 volumes of 'Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants' and 'Lantern Bushes of Australia'.

The first of these walks begins close to the bridge and is fairly flat and follows the stream for as far as you want to go. The first 300 odd metres has excellent informative boards covering the wildlife, history and conservation. The predominant vegetation is *Eucalyptus viminalis*

where koalas can be spotted; *Acacia melanoxylon*, *Coprosma quadrifida*. *Olearia argophylla* and *Olearia lirata*, tree fern - *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Polystichum* and an odd *Hedycaria angustifolia*, *Prostanthera lasianthos*, *Pomaderris aspera* are to be seen. The track proceeds for several hundred metres beyond the houses and the small water pump shed that supplies the store and camp.



Koala, Kennett River.
David Handscombe

Grey River Forest Walk

The second (a bus drop off) is a short walk which starts 6-8km up the Grey River road to the Grey River Scenic Reserve. The road winds up through coastal *Eucalyptus viminalis* and *Eucalyptus globulus* and *E. obliqua* (Messmate). This drier forest changes as the altitude decreases, *Acacia stricta* and *A. verticillata* disappear as the road descends into the Grey River - this is lush Otways rainforest. The road is lined with ferns, *Dicksonia*, *Polystichum*, *Blechnum* etc. From the obvious little picnic area walk back across the bridge and climb over the road barrier to access the narrow foot track which for the first 100 metres or so is lined with glow worms - a great show at night. The tree ferns along this section are amazing as they are enormous and have never been touched by fire. Filmy ferns, mosses, lichens and fungi abound. The



Road to Grey River Walk. Graham Goods.

track divides in 100 metres, the left dropping down to the stream (maybe 100 metres) and the right branch does a gentle climb to a small lookout. Great mountain ash become apparent here with their buttressed trunks and giant Blackwoods with not a branch for 25 metres. Look out for the rare antechinus (*Antichinus minimus*, Swamp Antechinus). The view across the river presents a wall of tree ferns and Manna Gums.



Fungi - Grey River Walk. Maree Goods

Maits Rest, Great Otway National Park

Kevin Sparrow

Kevin has been a member of SGAP/APS Warrnambool for 33 years and has served in all major committee positions. He has been their Newsletter Editor since 2014. He is the author of 'Plants of the Great South West', which covers plants from Port Campbell to the SA border. He is currently working on a fourth edition.

Here we will walk through an ancient rain forest, along an 800m circular self-guided boardwalk among giant beech trees hundreds of years old which tower over ancient tree ferns. Keep your eyes peeled for birds, as there are around 43 different species that aren't found anywhere else in the world.

Melba Gully



Lobelia anceps. Maree Goods.



Yellow Robin. Graham Goods.

This is a dense rainforest of myrtle beech, blackwood and tree-ferns, with an understorey of low ferns with mosses and fungi. It has prolific plant growth. It is one of the wettest places in Victoria. Here a short 1.2km return walk rated easy, takes approximately 35 minutes to complete.

Twelve Apostles

The tour will stop off at the famous 12 Apostles, magnificent rock stacks that rise up majestically from the Southern Ocean on Victoria's dramatic coastline. Erosion of the mainland coast's limestone cliffs began 10 to 20 million years ago, with the stormy Southern Ocean and blasting winds gradually wearing away the softer limestone to form caves in the cliffs. Enjoy a brief walk to take in the rugged views of the coastline, before we travel on to the popular seaside town of Port Campbell.



Twelve Apostles. Kevin Sparrow.

Bay of Islands Coastal Park

Further along the Great Ocean Road we will stop off at the Bay of Islands Coastal Park where you can enjoy more cliff top walks and scenic lookouts like London Bridge and be able to check out some of the local native plant species.



Bay of Islands. Kevin Sparrow

James Swan Reserve, Waterwise Garden, Warrnambool

Kevin Sparrow

The site was originally reserved for use as cattle yards and as a general market in May 1883. They were expanded in 1904 and finally closed in 1970 due to noise, odour and road duplication. The limestone wall on the northern boundary is the only remnant of the old sale yards.



James Swan Reserve. Kevin Sparrow.

With Council permission the Warrnambool and District Group of the Society for Growing Australian Plants, formed in 1976, established a waterwise garden around what is now the kindergarden. The Friends of Swan Reserve was formed in early 2010. They have worked hard to establish a new Wollemi Pine Bed, a Grasstree Bed and cleared



Eremophila Meringur Isaac. Kevin Sparrow.

and rejuvenated many of the old beds. The overgrown Banksia Bed was opened up with a walking track installed through the middle so people could easily see the many different Proteaceae species. Smaller low growing plants were selected to keep the bed open and discourage intruders. The Friends have also installed educational signage to name and explain many of the



The Banksia Bed. Kevin Sparrow.

flowering plants. In 2014 the Swan Reserve Garden became an annex to the Warrnambool Botanic Gardens.

The Friends have worked closely with Warrnambool City Council to establish the Playground and Aboriginal Recognition and Social Gathering Space acknowledging the region's aboriginal heritage. It was opened in November 2014.

The garden is a "Waterwise Garden" meaning that there is little or no watering of plants. They are watered in at planting and largely left to survive on what falls from the sky. The reserve is a popular place for people to stop off for lunch (picnic tables were installed for this purpose) or just to wander around to enjoy the gardens and the birdlife that they bring.

The Rocks - Dawson and Blood Garden

Chris Larkin

Chris Larkin has been a member of APS Foothills since around 1993 holding the positions of leader, secretary and treasurer. She was a contributing author to Snape's book 'The Australian Garden' Her garden has featured in several publications. Information supplied by Ross Dawson and David Handscombe.

The owners shifted onto this 2.5 acre property in 2016 with a vision to develop a sustainable food garden and landscaped native garden in front of the house for wildlife.

They have largely achieved their food sustainability with 21 raised



The first Brachychiton flower.
Ross Dawson.

garden beds, poly tunnel, hothouse and three orchards consisting of over 40 trees and 5 beehives. On the western side of the orchard is a native food hedge consisting of lemon myrtle, aniseed myrtle and Illawarra plums – the hedge was planted to protect the orchard from the winds. They are also having some success with Muntries (*Kunzea pomifera*) which frequently appear on the menu, Tasmanian pepper berry, Midyim berries and Warrigal greens.

The native garden of approximately 1.5 acres has 14 garden beds with

paths meandering between them to encourage people to walk through and admire the plants. Each garden bed has a different theme. The plants have been chosen for several different reasons – colorful flowers, contrasting foliage, a reputation for growing well in the area and just because they are interesting. The owners say ‘we wanted variety and we sure have that’. There is plenty of wildlife too.



Rainbow over The Rocks Garden. Ross Dawson.

7 Settlers Lane – The Ark Garden

Linda and David purchased the six acre property for their retirement in 2015, moving there in 2019 when the house was completed. They transported three truckloads of plants from their Pomonal nursery, which was on 230 acres, to hasten the establishment of a new garden. And yes, they tried to bring two of every plant – hence the name of the garden – The Ark Garden.



The Ark Garden. Linda Handscombe.

Linda and David grow some non Australian plants for cut flowers to sell, but the primary purpose of the garden is for their enjoyment of native plants as well as providing wildlife habitat, and showcasing Australian plants to those interested in having a look. Even though the garden is relatively young, a greater diversity of wildlife has either established permanently or dropped in for a while before moving on. And the species diversity continues to expand as the garden matures.



Peacock Spider, one of many in The Ark Garden. David Handscombe.

The owners are both keen plant growers with different preferences, so the garden has a mix of species and cultivars mostly propagated by themselves. Daisies figure prominently for quick colour and their attraction to insects, which in turn bring in the small birds. There are a lot of correas, an experimental rainforest, lots of grevilleas, small plants of the *Myrtaceae* family, brachychitons and an expanding collection of banksias and hakeas.



The Ark Garden. David Handscombe

Kennedy Garden

Paul Kennedy

Paul was awarded an OAM in 2013 for services to Australian plants, the environment and community. He is an Honorary Life Member of APS Vic, past President, Secretary and Treasurer of APS Victoria, past Convenor of two ANPSA conferences, past President and Secretary of ANPSA, Leader of the Hakea Study Group since 2010, and held executive positions for Maroondah, Shepparton and Colac/Otway Groups over the last 40 plus years.

The Kennedy garden is unique in that it contains 165 of the 169 *Hakea* species and 86 of the 98 *Banksia* species of Australia. So in one location you can see nearly an entire collection of two genera. Paul is the leader of the Hakea Study Group. There are also many other native plants such as melaleuca, isopogon and calothamnus to be seen in their garden. The soil is 900mm of sandy loam over heavy clay with a rainfall of approximately 750mm that comes mainly in the July - November period. The winters are cold and the summers warm with a few hot days. The garden was commenced in July 2014 and because of the



Isopogon Stucky's Hybrid. Paul Kennedy.

high rainfall garden beds have been raised and drains formed to shed excess moisture. Despite the cool temperate climate most species grow very well and flower.

Paul and Barbara have traveled extensively across Australia to see what conditions Australian plants are growing in and then try to replicate this in their own garden. As some Australian plants are now becoming endangered, gardens of this type are extremely important in providing seeds and cutting material to enable these plants to be introduced into other gardens so they do not become extinct.



Banksia spinulosa var. *cunninghamii*.
Paul Kennedy.

Gippsland Wilsons Promontory Tour

Rodger Elliot and Chris Clarke

Rodger is a long-time Australian plant enthusiast, writer (co-author of renowned 'The Encyclopaedia of Australian Plants Suitable for Cultivation' and author of other publications). Honorary Life Member of APS Victoria, Past Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria Board member (1995 - 2010); Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for contribution to the horticulture of Australian plants.

Introduction

It will be peak wildflower season in Gippsland in ecosystems ranging from coastal heathland, rainforests, mountains, fern gullies, woodlands, to salt marshes and mangroves. Our tour will visit floristically diverse areas including remnant heathland reserves, coastal parks, Morwell National Park and a big focus will be Wilson's Promontory National Park.

We plan to stay at Phillip Island and check out the famous Penguin Parade and spend three nights at Foster from where we can easily access the wonderful Wilson's Promontory National Park. Our return journey takes us via the heart of Gippsland and the stunning remnants of the once vast cool temperate rainforests of Gippsland.

The tour bus will have an expert guide on board and we have lined up speakers in the evenings highlighting the flora of the tour and also will visit some superb private gardens and the Celia Rosser Gallery. This article highlights four of our wildflower destinations.



Wilsons Promontory. Nicole Beres.

Wilsons Promontory National Park (the Prom)

The Prom as it's affectionately known is a conservation jewel of over 50,000 hectares that forms the southernmost tip of the Australian mainland. A UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, it has more than 750 species of vascular plants – 100 of which are threatened species in Victoria. There are some 290 species of fauna – 40 of which are threatened such as the New Holland Mouse and Long Nosed Potoroo. Corner Inlet is a RAMSAR protected bird reserve and half of Victoria's freshwater fish species occur in the park. Let's have a look at the human and natural history of The Prom before checking out the flora.

Human and Natural History

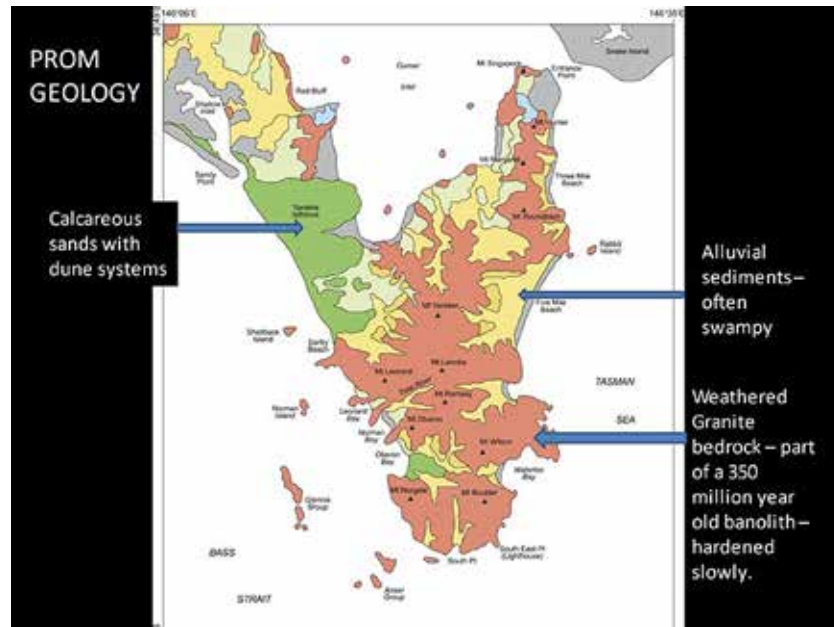
The Boon Wurrung, Bunurong and Gunaikurnai peoples all reference Wilsons Promontory in their traditions and stories of their country. These first people were seafarers and there is evidence of middens built up over thousands of years on many islands around The Prom whilst many types of canoes were documented by early white settlers.



Thomas Dick 1920 Port Macquarie NSW.

Around 30,000 years ago an ice age caused sea levels to drop by 120 metres and created a continuous land mass that stretched from Papua New Guinea to Tasmania. When the ice melted, taking about 6000 years, Bass Strait was formed - becoming a barrier some 12,000 years ago. Aboriginal people had lived on the vast plain that is now Bass Strait and interestingly the Yarra River joined with the Tamar River before heading out to the ocean to the west!

The Prom is composed mainly of weathered granite bedrock, part of a 350 million year old banolith of magma which hardened slowly underground. The Yanakie isthmus is calcareous sands and there are alluvial sediments around the edges. This geology made The Prom unsuitable for most farming pursuits but supports a great diversity of wildflowers.



(Geological Survey of Victoria, 1971; and Hill, 1992).

The Role of Fire

From South Peak on 1951 shows the remains of a large *Eucalyptus regnans* (Mountain Ash) forest which once covered the wetter peaks of the Prom. The frequency and intensity of fires since European settlement has increased and this forest is now rare on the Prom. In 2009 much of The Prom burned and the plants that need fire such as grass trees, *Xanthorrhoea* species, and orchids flowered en-masse.



The remains of Mountain Ash forest in 1951.



Picnic Bay looking towards Norman Island. Chris Clarke.

The Prom includes mountains, massive granite outcrops, boulders, creeks, sand dunes, cliffs, inlets and stunning beaches. The vegetation is therefore extremely rich and diverse with shrublands, wetlands, heathlands, exposed coastal vegetation plus fern gullies and cool temperate forests.

It was declared a National Park in 1905. The initial area involved was just over 30,000 hectares, with subsequent additions adding several off-shore islands and the southern part of the Yanakie Isthmus.

Prom Flora Snapshot

Numerous tall trees are present, with groves of *Acacia melanoxylon* - Blackwood Wattles, *Nothofagus cunninghamii* - Myrtle Beeches and over a dozen species of *Eucalyptus*. *Eucalyptus baxteri* (Brown Stringybark) is widespread and has coped well with fire being a “resprouter” with thick bark and threatened Gang Gang Cockatoos can often be seen feeding on them. The windswept areas are where Sheoaks often dominate, including *Allocasuarina verticillata*, the Drooping Sheoak, and



Gang Gang Cockatoo. Chris Clarke.

Allocasuarina littoralis, the Black Sheoak. There are also the smaller shrubby species of *Allocasuarina pusilla*, the Dwarf Sheoak and *Allocasuarina paludosa* the Scrub She-oak.

Banksia serrata, the Saw Banksia and *Banksia integrifolia*, the Coast Banksia are really at home in the Wilsons Promontory National Park. The presence of banksias ensures the survival of some of the birds and animals of the Prom. Honeyeaters are regular visitors to the nectar-rich flowers as are members of the possum family. The Prom is readily subjected to strong wind which helps to enhance the beauty of the Coast Banksia when the silvery undersides of the leaves are exposed to view.

Two banksias of smaller dimensions found in this area are *Banksia marginata*, the Silver Banksia, and *Banksia cunninghamii*, Hill Banksia. They can grow as shrubs to 4m or more in height, or in exposed coastal heathlands their size may be restricted to just a metre or so tall. *Banksia saxicola* is also present in the north-eastern sector and its only other natural occurrence is in the Grampians in western Victoria. A remarkable dislocation!



Banksia saxicola flower. Maree Goods.



Banksia saxicola fruit. Chris Clarke.

Between these banksias alone there are flowers produced throughout most of the year. *Banksia serrata* begins flowering in mid to late spring and continues right through summer. *Banksia saxicola* blooms through summer and autumn, while in early autumn *Banksia integrifolia* takes over and produces its yellow flower-spikes through until the end of winter. *Banksia marginata* has deep yellow flower-spikes of about 10cm long from late summer until spring while *Banksia cunninghamii* peaks in autumn and winter when the erect honey-coloured flower-spikes of 15 - 20cm tall are a magnet for the native birds.

Lilly Pilly Gully derives its name because of the Lilly Pilly, *Syzygium smithii* which occurs here. It is an area rich in eucalypts, fern gullies and heathlands. There is an abundance of bird life including rosellas, honeyeaters and robins. Koalas also live in the trees of Lilly Pilly Gully. This area has been challenged by a number of fires over recent years, as have other areas of the National Park.

Other medium to large shrubby plants include the white-flowered *Kunzea ambigua* and *Leptospermum juniperinum* and *Leptospermum laevigatum*. The flowering *Kunzea ambigua* cover hillsides in spring, attracting lots of butterflies and smelling strongly of honey.



Kunzea ambigua with Australian Admiral Butterfly. Chris Clarke.

The Sweet Bursaria, *Bursaria spinosa* is a variable species at the Prom, in that it can be a sizeable tree, virtually without spines or more shrubby and very spiny. It produces its fragrant white to cream flowers during summer, as does the Victorian Christmas Bush, *Prostanthera lasianthos* which is a member of the Mintbush family with strongly aromatic foliage. In moist shady areas ferns can be common. One of

the climbing/scrambling ferns *Microsorium scandens*, Fragrant Fern, inhabits the moist gullies and often grows as an epiphyte on tree-fern trunks.

Spring is when the smaller wildflowers of the Wilsons Promontory National Park really come into their own and provide eye-catching displays. The bright red pea-flowers of the Running Postman, *Kennedia prostrata* run across the ground with the Common Flat-pea *Platylobium obtusangulum* and Handsome Flat-pea *Platylobium montanum*



Bursaria spinosa. Chris Clarke.

rising slightly taller to display their broad yellow and red pea-flowers. Splashes of bright yellow are also provided by the Rough Guinea-flower, *Hibbertia aspera*, and the daisy flowers of *Chrysocephalum apiculatum*, Common Everlasting. Other stunning daisies include *Chrysocephalum baxteri* and the tricky to pronounce *Argentipallium obtusifolium*.



Platylodium montanum. Chris Clarke.

Often in striking combination with the yellow-flowered plants are the rich mauve-pink flowers of *Tetratheca ciliata*, and the erect flower-stalks of the Purple Flag, *Patersonia glabrata*, which prefers a spot where there is some moisture available as does its larger close mainly white-flowered relative, *Diplarrena moraea*. This White Iris has been successfully mass planted at the National Botanic Gardens in Canberra.



Argentipallium obtusifolium. Chris Clarke.



Patersonia glabrata. Chris Clarke.



Diplarrena moraea. Chris Clarke.

Another small tufting plant that provides an eye-catching pink floral display in spring and early summer is a trigger plant *Stylidium armeria*, which was reinstated as a separate species after being in the *Stylidium graminifolium* complex.

In coastal areas splashes of purple are commonly provided by *Swainsona lessertifolia*, the Purple Swainson-pea (photo below). *Leucophyta brownii*, Cushion Bush displays its stunning silvery-white foliage throughout the year and survives in the most exposed and seemingly inhospitable of sites on coastal cliffs and sand dunes. It does not have spectacular flowers but is an outstanding foliage plant, suitable for cultivation in sunny garden situations or in containers.



Swainsona lessertifolia. Chris Clarke.

Victoria's Floral Emblem, *Epacris impressa*, Common Heath, is also abundant at the Prom. The spikes of small tubular flowers produced mainly in winter and spring can be white, light pink, deep pink or reddish. Beard-heaths in the genus of *Leucopogon* also occur in the National Park and can be readily identified by the fringed or 'bearded' petals on the flowers. Another member of the heath family, *Leptecophylla juniperina* subsp. *oxycedrus*, a large shrub covered in crimson berries in Autumn is a *Cyathodes*-like plant that shows the strong link to the flora of Tasmania.



Leptecophylla juniperina subsp. *oxycedrus*. Chris Clarke.



Correa reflexa var. *reflexa*. Chris Clarke.

In autumn and winter one of the highlight species is the Common Correa, *Correa reflexa* var. *reflexa*. The forms most frequently seen in the park have pendent bells of red tipped with green or greenish yellow, but other colour variations can also be found.

A spectacular and significant plant of the Wilsons Promontory National Park is undoubtedly the Grass-tree, *Xanthorrhoea australis*. It is widespread throughout the park and certainly very eye-catching when the flower-stems to 3m tall are produced. Flowering does not occur every year, but an abundance of flowers is usually seen after fire and can provide memorable displays. This will certainly be the case this spring. The trunkless *X. minor* subsp. *lutea* is also present and plants can bear multiple flower stems.



Northern Wilsons Promontory, *Xanthorrhoea australis* after 2009 fire. Reiner Richter.

The park is also rich in native ground orchids, including Spider-orchids in the *Caladenia* genus including the delightful *Caladenia latifolia*. There are *Chiloglottis* species - Bird Orchids, species of *Pterostylis* or Greenhood orchids, as well as Sun-orchids, Bird-orchids, Mayfly-orchids, Austral Lady's Tresses and *Gastrodia sesamoides*, Cinnamon Bells which is incapable of producing chlorophyll. On a trip with APS Keilor Plains we found a Sun-orchid previously unrecorded in the park *Thelymitra malvina* in full flower in the pouring rain!



Caladenia latifolia. Chris Clarke.



Thelymitra malvina. Chris Clarke.

To visit areas such as Wilsons Promontory in the seasons following a bushfire can be a memorable experience. Many orchids flower profusely after fire including *Pyrorchis nigricans* or Red Beaks.



Pyrorchis nigricans. Chris Clarke.

One of the delightful aspects of visiting the Prom is that many animals such as emu, kangaroo and wombats are easily seen. The wombats like the one pictured below are lighter than most and Chris's family have always referred to them as the blonde Wombats due to their beach side bleaching existence.



Wombat. Chris Clarke.

We hope that Tour participants will love seeing the Prom in spring 2024 as well as many floral hot spots and gardens on the way to and from this magnificent National Park.

Morwell National Park

Mike Beamish

Mike was born, raised, educated and employed in the Latrobe Valley and lived in Boolarra for nearly 40 years. He is a member of APS Victoria, APS Latrobe Valley Group, and the Friends of Morwell National Park for about 25 years. He is a frequent visitor to the parks and reserves throughout the Latrobe Valley.

Another stop on our Gippsland tour will be wonderful Morwell National Park. Declared in 1967 to preserve colonies of two rare plants that grow on the shrubs and tree-ferns along Fosters Gully: Butterfly Orchids (*Sarcophilus australis*) and Oval Fork-ferns (*Tmesipteris ovata*). The orchids can still be easily observed today by keen-eyed walkers along the tracks through Fosters Gully, but it is not known if the Oval Fork-ferns are still surviving in the remote, trackless upper reaches of the

Gully. In 1987, the Billy Creek section was added to the park, extending the area protected to nearly 500 hectares.

Historical use of the landscape included the Morwell town water supply in the early 1900's from a weir and pipeline in the Billy Creek valley, sand and gravel mining in Fosters Gully in the 1920's and logging during the 1940's and 1950's. There were also some gold diggings in Foster's Gully and a rifle range and lodge along Billy Creek during World War 2. All of these activities have left visible remnants in various parts of the park.



Sarcophilus australis Chris Lindorff.

A walk around Foster's Gully will allow us to observe the remnant forests of the northern foothills of the Strzelecki Ranges. In the wet fern gullies the dominant trees are the Mountain Grey Gums (*Eucalyptus cypellocarpa*), with Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*) and Silver Wattles (*A. dealbata*), Muttonwood (*Myrsine howittiana*), Sweet Pittosporum (*P. undulatum*) and Prickly Currant-bush (*Coprosma quadrifida*) in the understorey. An interesting small climber in fern gullies and rainforest

pockets is *Fieldia australis*. The ground layer consists of many species of ferns (at least 35) and orchids (at least 47 have been recorded, but some have not been seen for many years) amongst grasses, herbs and fungi. On the drier ridges, Messmate (*Eucalyptus obliqua*) and Prickly Stringybark/Yertchuk (*E. consideriana*) become dominant above many species of daisies, peas, small wattles, sedges, lilies and rushes.



Fieldia australis. Chris Clarke.

The Park provides remnant habitat for a number of birds (at least 96 species recorded) and animals, such as the Superb Lyrebird, Powerful Owl, Greater, Krefft's and Feathertail Gliders, Agile and Dusky Antechinus, Wombats, Brushtail, Ringtail and Bobuck Possums, Swamp Wallabies and Eastern Grey Kangaroos, but perhaps the most iconic (and visible) is the colony of Strzelecki Koalas that live here. These Koalas are considered to be the most genetically diverse and robust in the country, as they are descendants of animals that survived the widespread culling for the fur trade that occurred during the 1930's, rather than the inbred descendants of the few animals from French Island that were used to re-populate large areas throughout the nation.

Traralgon Railway Reservoir Conservation Reserve

The 'Res', as it is affectionately known by locals, was established during the late 1980's when the land became superfluous to the owner's requirements and was handed back to local government control. It is 29.5 hectares in size and protects some bushland and grassland that was never cultivated or converted to pasture, and so still contains the native herbs grasses and shrubs that are indigenous to the threatened Gippsland Plains ecosystems. For example, the Button Everlasting *Coronidium scorpioides* and *Lomandra multiflora* occur here.



Coronidium scorpioides. Maree Goods.

The main features of the Reserve are the wetland areas that were first established in 1880 as a water supply for the steam trains that operated on the newly constructed (1877) Gippsland line. When an alternative (and more reliable) water supply became available in 1908, the reservoir fell into disuse and the original wooden weir wall collapsed, flooding parts of Traralgon and scouring out the



Lomandra multiflora.
Mike Beamish.

overflow channel, creating what is now known as Kickhorse Canyon. Small scale revegetation commenced in the early 1990's and the walking tracks and footbridges were installed in 1992. Now the "Res" is a mecca for locals to enjoy the benefits of nature, bird-watching and exercise in a natural environment right on their doorsteps.

Edward Hunter Heritage Bush Reserve - Moe

This reserve has a similar history to Traralgon's 'Res'. Originally constructed as a water supply for steam trains in the late 1870's, it remained in use until the electrification of the railway system in the 1950's. From the 1930's to the 1970's, the reservoir was popular as the town's swimming pool and boardwalks, platforms and towers were constructed to support this activity.

The Reserve is about 58 hectares in size, has never been cleared and is surrounded by medium density housing on its north, east and west sides, and by larger rural residential blocks on the south. The vegetation consists of Lowland Forest on the slopes, consisting of various species of Eucalypts (Messmate, Yertchuk, Silver Stringybark, Narrow-leaved Peppermint), Wattles (Blackwood, Silver), Banksia (Hairpin, Silver), Hakea (Furze, Needlewood), Cherry Ballart, Peas, Daisies, Orchids and many more. In the gullies are Fern Swamps, with Scrambling Coral Fern (*Gleichenia microphylla*) a highlight and the Moondarra Spider Orchid a variant *Caladenia australis* is found here.



Caladenia australis. Mike Beamish.

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- Victorian National Parks Association (VNPA). <https://vnpa.org.au/>

Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) and member societies

Australian Native Plants Society (Australia) Inc. (ANPSA)

President: John Aitken

Secretary: Rhonda Daniels secretary@anpsa.org.au

Website: anpsa.org.au

Australian Plants Society NSW Ltd

President: John Desmond office@austplants.com.au

PO Box 263 Cremorne Junction 2090

Website: www.austplants.com.au

The Australian Native Plants Society, Canberra Region Inc.

President: Lucinda Royston president@nativeplantscbr.com.au

secretary@nativeplantscbr.com.au

Website: nativeplantscbr.com.au

Society for Growing Australian Plants (Queensland Region) Inc.

President: Roger Kitchen

Secretary: Paul Taylor: PO Box 586 Fortitude Valley QLD 4006

Email: secretary@npq.org.au

Website: www.npq.org.au

Australian Plants Society, S.A. Region Inc.

President: Hans Greisser

Secretary: Leonore Swanson

PO Box 304, Unley, SA 5061; secretary@australianplantssa.asn.au

Website: www.australianplantssa.asn.au

Australian Plants Society Tasmania Inc.

President: Jenny Boyer jennyaboyer@gmail.com

Secretary: Mary Slattery

PO Box 1205 Gravelly Beach 7276

Website: www.apstas.org.au

Top End Native Plants Society

President: Russell Dempster

topendnativeplantsociety@hotmail.com

PO Box 135 Palmerston NT 0831

Website: www.topendnativeplants.org.au

Australian Plants Society Victoria Inc.

President: Miriam Ford

Secretary: Chris Long: PO Box 357 Hawthorn 3122

secretary@apsvic.org.au

Website: www.apsvic.org.au

Wildflower Society of Western Australia Inc.

President: Brett Loney

Secretary: Kerry Smith: PO Box 519 Floreat 6014.

enquiry@wildflowersocietywa.org.au

Website: www.wildflowersocietywa.org.au

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