

**Australian Plants Society**

**Melton & Bacchus Marsh Inc (A0026204P)**

ABN: 68 053 689 781 Website: [www.runningpostman.org.au](http://www.runningpostman.org.au)

Email: [apsmeltonbacchus@gmail.com](mailto:apsmeltonbacchus@gmail.com)

APS Victoria website: <http://www.apsvic.org.au/>



# THE RUNNING POSTMAN

NEWSLETTER No. 121

May - June 2012

edited by David & Barb Pye

## **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> May – Melton Botanic Garden – GARDEN TOUR AND PLANTING**

At 10.00 am, meet at the corner of Tullidge & William Streets, Melton (MEL337 D10).  
Park inside.

After a tour of the Melton Botanic Garden, the group will contribute to the planting program. Although the formal program is in the morning, there will be opportunity to have a picnic lunch and continue planting into the early afternoon. Even if you cannot stay after lunch, bring a picnic lunch and enjoy it in the garden.

For further information contact Barb or David Pye (5428 9369 or [dabpye@gmail.com](mailto:dabpye@gmail.com))

**Note: Daytime meeting.**

## **Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May – Melton Botanic Garden – COMMUNITY PLANTING DAY.**

For those who cannot attend on the Wednesday, this day gives another opportunity to visit the Melton Botanic Garden, have a BYO picnic lunch, and plant in the Eucalyptus Arboretum. If you cannot dig, there are plenty of other jobs, including planting and watering.

10 am to 3 pm. Come for the morning or the afternoon or both. If coming for the day, bring a picnic lunch and enjoy it in the garden.

RSVP: If you are coming, please let us know by Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May, so that we can ensure sufficient plants and tools.

For further information contact Barb or David Pye (5428 9369 or [dabpye@gmail.com](mailto:dabpye@gmail.com))

## **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> June HAKEAS - talk by Royce Raleigh**

At Dunvegan, Willows Historic Park, in Melton (Melway 337 C9)

Doors open at 7.30pm, Program commences at 8pm

Royce is highly regarded for his knowledge of Hakeas, and has spoken to our group previously on other topics. He has always given an entertaining and informative talk. Royce and Jeanne (his wife) have many years experience in growing natives, and have developed an excellent garden at Wartook in the northern Grampians.

## Plant of the Month for February *Grevillea Plurijuga*, from Graeme Woods

*Grevillea plurijuga* comes in two main forms plus various others with small differences. *G. plurijuga* varies from prostrate to two metres tall. The prostrate form lends itself to be a wonderful plant grown as a standard grevillea. The plant of the month can be found growing as a standard at the front of our house facing north with its trailing arms laying across the verandah. Most plants of the typical form are available at specialist native suppliers as a grafted plant and are long lived and spectacular specimens. The flowers are stunning bird attractors and always receive admiring glances from visitors.

I would recommend this plant for any garden as a long lived "Show Stopper".



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## Is it PREYING or PRAYING? report by Cathy Powers

At our March meeting, Margaret Holmes introduced us to a variety of invertebrates of which most of us would never see. I never fail to be surprised at what we miss when experiencing nature – in our garden, in the bush or even in our home.

There are over 1000 species of native Australian snails and slugs. Generally, the garden snails will be introduced species and have two pairs of tentacles as opposed to the one pair our native species have. The Giant Panda Snail (*Hedleyella falconeri*), which can get larger than a tennis ball, is Australia's largest land snail.

Moving away from the wet and slimy – Margaret (I am not suggesting that Margaret was wet and slimy) breeds stick insects and she had some magnificent specimens to share with us. The stick insects that I find in my area are *Ctenomorpha chronus* (I think). Sometimes it is difficult to know which is the stick and which is the stick insect unless it has a red body like the one on the right (incidentally hanging on to an orchid).

I remember, as a younger person learning about insects, that I thought the Praying Mantis was spelled Preying Mantis because it preyed on its food. Instead it IS Praying Mantis. The way the mantis' front forelegs are held up together (as if in prayer) when resting gave rise to its name, with "mantis" deriving from the Greek for "prophet."

Praying Mantis, a master of disguise, is a carnivorous insect with a very colorful appetite. It can turn its triangular head up to 180 degrees, which is quite unique for an insect, in search for food. Praying mantis have excellent eye sight and they can see up to 18 meters (60 feet) away. They are not dangerous creatures (well at least not to the humans) and their average lifespan is around 12 months.



Which leads nicely into the very interesting bit of information and filled in some blanks of knowledge I had after an evening of moth photography.

I photographed a very interesting insect and now I know it is a Mantis fly (*Mantispidae*).



Neither a mantis nor a fly, this is a relative of lacewings and owlflies, and it is a great example of convergent evolution. Compare the shape of its grasping front limbs to those of the totally unrelated mantis to see how natural selection can reach the similar solutions to similar problems (grasping prey) from very different starting points.

From this point, I could not help myself. I had never heard of an Owlfly so my next bit of investigation is to find out what that was. Surprise! I actually had photographed one and at first thought it was a dragonfly.

Owlflies (*Ascalaphidae*) are one of the "ugly ducklings" of insects. There are 40 species known in Australia. The grotesque larvae are voracious predators in leaf litter and on trees. They sit and wait for prey to stray in between their oversize mandibles, seizing them and feeding on the body liquids within. The adults are elegant strong-flying insects which are sometimes confused with dragonflies.



Owlflies are the strongest fliers amongst insects in the order *Neuroptera*, with adults of some species active during the day, although most Australian species are seen at night when they are attracted to artificial lighting. The adults of many species release a strong somewhat noxious smell when they are handled, presumably to deter birds and other predators.

With the assistance of Ingrid & Silvia, everyone had the opportunity to hold at least one of Margaret's specimens. Nothing like a thousand legs crawling on your hand! I think the girls knew more about the subjects than anyone else in the audience.

Thanks to Margaret for a great presentation and giving us an opportunity to learn a little bit about those inhabitants of our garden which can make a huge difference.

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## PLANT OF THE MEETING March 2012

Hakea something or the other: *report by Cathy Powers*

To give a bit of background, I searched the internet regarding *Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty' because there are some "BB" features in my garden plant. Brian Walters, webmaster of the ANPSA website, kindly gave me permission to use the following:

*Hakea* 'Burrendong Beauty' has an interesting history. It was discovered growing at Burrendong Arboretum in the central west of New South Wales in the 1980s, presumably from a batch of seed sent across from Western

Australia. As it grew and flowered, it was realised that it didn't fit the description of any known species. Subsequent investigation produced a level of excitement as it was thought to be *Hakea crassinervia*, a species believed (at the time) to be extinct. On more detailed examination, this identification was determined to be incorrect and the plant was found to be a hybrid with *H. myrtoidea*



and *H. petiolaris* as parents. As both parent species were growing in the general vicinity of the hybrid plant at the Arboretum, it seems possible that the hybrid arose at Burrendong rather than as a seedling from a batch of seed sent to the Arboretum.

Of further interest is the fact that *H. crassinervia* has turned out to be a taxonomic synonym of some subspecies of *H. petiolaris* and is not a valid name. Accordingly, *H. crassinervia* is not now listed as among Australia's threatened flora.

All of this has left us with an attractive hybrid hakea known as 'Burrendong Beauty' that is now in general cultivation. It is a medium sized,

spreading shrub reaching about 1.5m high by 2-3m wide. The leaves are fairly still, about 40mm long and elliptical in shape. The pink flowers occur in globular-shaped clusters in the leaf axils in winter. Flowering is prolific and as the flowers open the cream styles emerge to give a 'pincushion' effect. Apparently the hybrid sets little seed.

So, where does that leave me? I know that this plant was purchased with the name tag 'Burrendong Beauty' and most likely was grown as a seedling from one such plant. The problem arising from a seedling is that it rarely grows true to form. Most often there is a throw-back to one of the parents. In this case, my plant has all the best features - it is a large shrub 2mX2m. The leaves are fairly stiff but much larger and less pointed than that of the *H. myrtoidea*. The flowers occur in the leaf axils, much more stunning than either parent and the shrub usually give two flushes of flowers. One early April and then again in late April. It does produce seeds but I have been very reluctant to grow this plant from seed – I feel it would be best grown from cuttings, something I have yet to try. Regardless, it is one of the best Hakeas I have in the garden for the birds, bees and me.




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## March 2012 APS Vic C of M and District Group Workshops

report supplied by Brenda Moore, Maroondah Group delegate

Recently, on 12 March, the APS Vic Executive and delegates from most district groups met at Melton for a Committee of Management meeting followed by two workshops and finally a tour of the Eucalyptus Arboretum at the Melton Botanic Garden.

Some interesting aspects of the committee meeting were as follows:

- Each district group was issued with three new outdoor yellow APS signs to be used to signpost group events.
- A large poster re Myrtle Rust was also distributed to each group.
- The publication *Plants of the High Country – A Guide for Walkers* will be released in mid-May and hopefully on sale by June 2012. APS Vic contributed to the publication costs and in return obtained advertising space both inside the book and on the outside cover.
- No new information has been received re the proposed new insurance scheme for volunteer members such as us. It seems it would cost more, it has to be agreed to by all groups, and it seems unlikely to happen.

- The policy re Myrtle Rust is that all “trafficking” or distribution of potential Myrtle Rust host material is to cease until January 2013.
- The purchase of two laptop computers and accompanying software for APS Vic executive members has been approved.
- Keith Buck has agreed to be APS Vic Vice-President, along with Ross Field, until the end of 2012. Cathy Beamish is the new Minute Secretary for APS Vic.
- A new District Group, Echuca-Moama District APS Inc., was incorporated in February 2012. There are now thirty-one District Groups across Victoria.
- If you wish to visit a Trust for Nature property, there is a woodland reserve not too far away at Stratford, past Sale, which was purchased in 2006 with financial assistance from APS Vic. You do need to contact the Manager before visiting.
- The APS Vic Budget Statement to the end of 2011 has been completed. Book sales resulted in a profit of \$5100.00 due to the hard work of our very own Bill Aitchison and Sue Guymer. Many thanks to them for their continued effort.
- The way our subscriptions paid to APS Vic are spent was explained. It is proposed to make a pie-chart to present these facts more clearly to members.
- For the Budget to ‘break even’ this year it is likely that APS Vic single membership fees will have to increase by \$5.00 p.a. to \$30 p.a. for singles and family memberships to \$33 p.a. It should be noted that there has been no increase over the previous two years. Any new member who joins before 1 July of this year will be charged at the old rate for the coming year.
- Membership of APS Vic has increased to 1243 members of whom several hundred are Lone Members i.e. not members of any District Group. Marg Seaton is the new Membership Secretary.
- APS Vic is considering the purchase of a PA system which local groups could borrow for major events such as Quarterly Meetings.
- The Conservation Officer, Neil Marriott, reported that the Vic. Govt. is watering down Environment Victoria regulations on Native Vegetation Protection. It is planned to send a letter of protest re this.
- The Webmaster, Graham Oliver, reported that the most visited pages on

the APS Vic website are *Plant Selection* and *Recommended Plants*. He requests we send him photos of Australian flowers, group activities and so on to maintain interest in the website.

- Graham has a template set up for groups who want to start up a new web site.
- Member usage of the Seed Bank has been in decline. This will be discussed at the November meeting.
- Certificates of Commendation and other awards will be presented at the December AGM.
- The Growth and Development subcommittee have developed a brochure re the *3D Gardening Fred Rogers Seminar* to be held in November of this year at Darebin and RBG Cranbourne. You will be able to register on-line from 1 June or via a Registration Form which will be included in the June issue of *Growing Australian*. Make your selections of talks and walks and **register early. Late applications not accepted.** For information: Email: [fjcrogers2012@gmail.com](mailto:fjcrogers2012@gmail.com) website: [www.apsvic.org.au](http://www.apsvic.org.au)

Following the Committee of Management meeting we reviewed our previous workshop of March 2011 and then, in Workshop 1, evaluated the interaction of APS Vic and the District Groups in the categories of Administration Services, Support, Communication, Promotion, Structure and Membership. Participants noted what they saw as happening at present in these areas and made suggestions re what might be the way to go in the future. Better usage of the APS colourful banners, incentives to attract new members, a night meeting for members to learn how to make their own Power Point Presentations, APS garden visits which were advertised in the local area so that local people, non-members, could attend and gift memberships were some of the suggestions, with different ideas being relevant to different groups and their members.

After lunch and the Plant Sale, courtesy of the Pyes of Bullengarook, we participated in Workshop 2 at which we were presented with four proposals as to how the administrative structure of APS Vic might be altered and improved. One proposal outlined the possibility of dividing the state into five regions, quite a complicated procedure which nevertheless received the second largest number of votes.

In the final outcome, which was selected by a big majority of members, the decision was to

make no major changes. APS Vic will go on subsidizing travel costs if claimed and each District Group will subsidize their delegate's travel costs as negotiated. It is proposed to introduce a by-law so that group delegates are appointed annually and APS Vic is notified of their details. This should ensure some continuity of delegates at meetings.

Towards the end of a busy, interesting day we were rewarded with a visit to the Melton Botanic Garden which is in the early stages of development. An enormous amount of hard work has gone into the first stages of this garden with the Eucalyptus Arboretum, featuring trees from dry areas, making amazing progress considering its short existence. A Friends Group is active and hard working and provided home-made afternoon tea to our group. David and

Barbara Pye, who are Melton APS members and nursery owners in the region, have been instrumental in the development of this arboretum, organizing, among other things, the propagation of seed, the potting on and the planting of young eucalyptus plants. All the plants we saw were healthy, strong and beautiful and had put on amazing growth since their planting over the last twelve months or so. I'm sure our members went home envious that anyone could grow plants such as these. In all, a well organised, thought provoking day which made us realize just how much work is undertaken behind the scenes by the hard working APS Vic Executive Committee.

Brenda Moore  
APS Maroondah Delegate  
22 March 2012

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### **Biodiversity in the Brisbane Ranges – April meeting**

*Report by Barb Pye*

Cathy's talk was beautifully illustrated with her gorgeous photography.

We learned about some of the history of the Brisbane Ranges, both ancient and more recent. We saw flora and fauna of all types, from very tiny insects and moths to larger flora of all sorts, from orchids (of course) to trees and birds. We saw some interaction between all of these - birds feeding on flowers, insects feeding on insects. We all came away with a greater understanding of the area which is our nearest National Park. Thanks Cathy

The park has 619 plant species representing nearly a quarter of Victoria's native flora, and is noted for its wildflowers. Many of the plants are rare, or remote from their other localities in East Gippsland, and the drier western Victoria. The locally common *Grevillea steiglitziana* is indigenous to the Ranges. There are more than 180 bird species, including the Peregrine Falcon, migratory Rainbow Bird and Powerful Owl. Koalas are particularly abundant around Anakie Gorge. Other mammals include Swamp Wallabies, Eastern Grey Kangaroos, Possums (Brush-tailed and Ring-tailed), Sugar Gliders and Tuans.

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### **Excursion to the Brisbane Ranges**

On the Sunday after Cathy's talk a small group of us visited the Brisbane ranges as a follow up. It had been planned to walk along Anakie gorge, but unfortunately, the track was closed. However, Ron took us to a number of other areas, where we enjoyed the bush. Because of the time of year not much was in flower although we did find a number of flowering species, encouraged by Ron's awarding of candy prizes to all who discovered something different.





## SHOWS, CONFERENCES, PLANT SALES & OTHER ITEMS OF INTEREST 2012

16/17 June –Quarterly Gathering hosted by APS Geelong, Narana Creations, Torquay Road, Geelong (near Grovedale)

11 August – Maranoa Festival, hosted by City of Boroondara. Mel 46G7. Plant sales, tours, nature trail, environmental displays, free BBQ

25/26 August – Quarterly Gathering hosted by APS Grampians

1 September – **CANCELLED** APS Wilson Park Plant Sale, Wilson Botanic Park, Princes Highway, Berwick

8/9 September – ANPS EG (Bairnsdale) Spring Spectacular, Mechanics Hall, Omeo Highway, Lucknow. Displays, plant sales, art, photography and much more.

8/9 September APS Yarra Yarra Native Plants Expo 2011 at Eltham Community & Reception Centre, 801 Main Road, Eltham from 10 am to 4.00 pm both days.

**NEW** 6 October APS Mitchell Spring Plant Expo at Memorial Hall, Sydney Road, Kilmore. 9.00 am to 3.00 pm. Native plant sales, book sales, environmental information on hand, native flora and landscape artwork by local artists for

viewing and purchase. Entry \$2 adults, children free.

6/7 October APS Grampians Pomonal annual flower show

20/21 October – APS Foothills at the Knox Sustainability festival, Rowville Community Centre, Rowville. Plants for sale, displays, gum nut crafts.

20/21 October 2012 APS South Gippsland Native Flower Show, plant sale, book sale. Leongatha Recreation Reserve, Exhibition Shed.

10/11 November FJC Rogers Seminar – 3D Garden Design – Dream it, design it, do it! Saturday at Darebin Arts & Entertainment Centre, Preston; Sunday at Royal Botanic Gardens Cranbourne

1 December – Committee of Management meeting and AGM.

10 to 16 August 2013 - ANPSA conference, hosted by Queensland SGAP in Mooloolaba on the Sunshine Coast. The theme is 'Diversity is in our Nature'

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### APS Melton & Bacchus Marsh Committee

President	Barb Pye	5428 9369
Vice President	Jean Partridge	
Secretary	Ron Powers	5369 4302, <a href="mailto:apsmeltonbacchus@gmail.com">apsmeltonbacchus@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Lucille McCarthy	5428 9320
Committee	David Pye, Norris McCarthy, Ann Goetz	

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