

NATURELINK

NEWSLETTER OF THE CRANBOURNE FRIENDS ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS VICTORIA INC.



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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work and learn, the peoples of the Kulin (Koolin) Nation, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future.

Cranbourne Friends Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria,
Inc. 1000 Ballarto Road, Cranbourne Victoria 3977
Inc no. A0025281B, ABN 43 551 008 609
Web address: www.rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Photo: *Spyridium coactilifolium*, Butterfly *Spyridium*, Ironbark Garden, by Peter Williamson

Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria botanist names carnivorous plant after the orangutan to raise awareness of their plight

Dr Alastair Robinson, Manager Biodiversity Services at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, together with a team of Malaysian botanists, has documented a critically endangered carnivorous plant in Malaysia, *Nepenthes pongoides*, which they named after the orangutan to raise awareness of the major threats to its survival.

When the team noticed that the plant's stems and emerging leaves were thickly covered with long, dark, rusty red hairs, they immediately recognised a striking similarity with the orangutan (*Pongo pygmaeus*).

"We had a fleeting encounter with an orangutan near camp the evening before we located the plants, so it was front of mind," he said.

Dr Robinson said that naming the plant after the orangutan might help raise awareness of their shared critically endangered status.

"People tend to overlook plants in favour of animals—it's a recognised phenomenon known as plant blindness," he said.

Dr Robinson hopes that by raising awareness about the species, greater measures will be taken to protect it, perhaps including the legal collection of seeds so that the plants can be grown in captivity.

"We cannot protect what we don't know, so documentary work like this is a key step towards reducing the risk of species extinction and loss of biodiversity."

"Cataloguing biodiversity provides the critical taxonomic and ecological knowledge needed to develop and implement meaningful conservation measures," he said.

Photo: Alviana Damit with *Nepenthes pongoides* - credit Adillah Yusof



The new plant was discovered on a low-elevation mountain range with just 39 mature individuals observed.

The primary threat to the species is illegal poaching by collectors who are willing to pay top dollar for such plants. Other threats—also faced by the orangutan—include land clearance and random episodic events such as fires.

Dr Robinson assisted with describing and documenting the plant, and lodged specimens at Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria's National Herbarium in Melbourne, which is home to nearly 1.6 million plant, algae and fungi specimens. Specimens were also lodged at Malaysia's Sandakan Herbarium.

As an authority on *Nepenthes*, and having grown up in Malaysia, Dr Robinson strived to provide expertise to his Malaysian colleagues, while ensuring that all key decisions about the new species were made by them.

Nepenthes is one of the most species-rich genera of carnivorous plants, comprising around 160 species. Glands within the pitchers produce digestive enzymes that help break down trapped prey.

The team recorded remains of various prey in the pitchers, from beetles to centipedes, giant millipedes, and even a freshwater crab.

Botanic Illustrator Ellis Rowan – A talk by Stephen Ryan



Join well known plantsman Stephen Ryan on Sunday afternoon, July 13, at 2 pm, for a talk about the internationally renowned Australian botanical artist, naturalist, writer, and explorer Ellis Rowan who painted over 3000 works mainly in watercolour and predominantly of flowers, birds and occasionally insects and butterflies.

Stephen Ryan is the well-known curator of Dicksonia Rare Plants, a previous host of Gardening Australia, and an author and radio commentator heard on 3CR and ABC. Read more in Tess Holderness's interview:

<https://rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au/new/wp-content/uploads/Article-about-Stephen-Ryan-his-home-garden-by-Tess.pdf>

Stephen's talk connects the history of the Botanic Gardens to Ellis Rowan, who is recognized for painting and identifying many Australian plants. Ellis Rowan travelled over vast tracts of Australia from Western Australia to Northern Queensland, as well as traversing the Torres Straits, New Guinea, North America, and India.

Stephen has been campaigning for a life-size bronze sculpture of Ellis Rowan to be located at Mt Macedon.

Bookings are essential and tickets are available from the following link

<https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/73487-botanic-illustrator-ellis-rowan-statue-proposed>

Illustrations: Ellis Rowan. Birds of Paradise (1917), Waratahs, New South Wales (1882) – courtesy Art Galleries of New South Wales and Victoria.



Join Us

As Stephen Ryan tells us about renowned botanical illustrator, Ellis Rowan.

Date:
13th July 2pm to 3pm

Cost
\$20 for members
\$25 for non-members

Location
Auditorium, Cranbourne
Gardens

Photos: Stephen Ryan in nursery
garden – Tess Holderness



Banksia blechnifolia - Rodger Elliot



Banksia dallanneyi sub. media - Rodger Elliot

Banksia Festival 2025

16 -24 Aug 2025

The Banksia Festival celebrates Australian culture inspired by the plant genus Banksia and runs from Saturday 16th August till Sunday 24th August, 2025 at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria, Cranbourne. It is presented by Cranbourne Friends, RBGV and RBGV.

While you are visiting, you can also access the Australian Garden, the RBGV Conservation Zone and the Boon Wurrung Café. You might like to consider bringing a picnic lunch as we are expecting many people to be in attendance, on the opening day in particular.

Opening Day: Saturday 16th August

A: Keynote Presentations, Tarnuk Room, Australian Garden.

- 10:00 am** ● Opening address of the festival by **Professor David Cantrill** from the RBGV. Professor Cantrill has done extensive scientific work on the fossil history of Antarctica, including of Proteaceae.
- 11:15 am** ● Presentation by **Kevin and Kathy Collins**, on the science and art of banksia cultivation.
- 02:00 pm** ● Presentation by **Dr. Inga Simpson**, critically acclaimed on the representations of Banksias in literature.
- 03:00 pm** ● Book signing: Dr Inga Simpson will have a range of her books available for purchase and signing.

B: Banksia Tour of the Australian Garden. Meet at the Visitor Centre. Continues daily.

- 11:00 am** ● Guided Banksia tour of the Australian Garden. Booking is essential.

C: Plant sale, Undercroft area, Visitor Centre, Australian Garden.

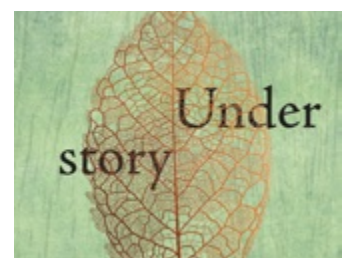
Plant sale. Banksias in pots and tubes will be available for sale, including rare and unusual species. Continues Sunday and following weekend.

D: Art Exhibition, Auditorium, Visitor Centre, Australian Garden. Continues Sunday and following weekend.

Art Exhibition. Artwork prints and cards, sewn craft work, jewellery, glasswork and photos, display and sale.



Inga Simpson





Banksia robur - Paul Sierakowski

Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections

In the 1970's, plans for what was to become the RBGV Cranbourne site and the Australian Garden were discussed, and the site was first mooted. Test plantings were established on an old sand mining site. The plantings proved very successful and were a critical component in making the case for the Cranbourne Gardens site. Many of these plants continue to thrive; what is now known as the Special Collections is a unique collection of well-established and unusual plants. This tour, which is a rare opportunity to see a "back of house" site, is well worth it, but is only suitable for the fit and able, appropriately dressed. The half-hour walk to the site, on uneven and loose sandy ground, is followed by a challenging walk around Special Collections area.

Meet at the Visitor Centre. Booking is essential

Sunday 17th August

A. Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections.

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| 10:00 am | ● | First round: Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections. |
| | | |
| 02:00 pm | ● | Second Round: Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections. |

B: Banksia Tour of the Australian Garden. Meet at the Visitor Centre

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| 11:00 am | ● | Guided Banksia tour of the Australian Garden. Booking is essential. |
|----------|---|---|

Wednesday 20th August

A. Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| 10:00 am | ● | First round: Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections. |
| | | |
| 02:00 pm | ● | Second Round: Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections. |

Please note that the Exhibition and Sales will not operate during the week.

Saturday 23rd August

A. Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| 10:00 am | ● | First round: Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections. |
| | | |
| 02:00 pm | ● | Second Round: Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections. |

B: Banksia Tour of the Australian Garden. Meet at the Visitor Centre

- | | | |
|----------|---|---|
| 11:00 am | ● | Guided Banksia tour of the Australian Garden. Booking is essential. |
|----------|---|---|



Banksia baueri - Paul Sierakowski

Last day: Sunday 24th August

A: Banksia Workshops – choose and book which you would like to attend:

10:00 am

● **Location - Elliot centre:** *Banksia canei* and *Banksia saxicola* – Laura Simmons

Location - Kiosk: Floral art - Heather Harrington

Location - Visitors Centre: Jewellery workshop - Claire Vaganiance

Location - Friends' Nursery: *Banksia* propagation – Paul Sierakowski

01:00 pm

● **Location - Friends' Nursery:** *Banksia* propagation – Paul Sierakowski



Banksia plagiocarpa - Paul Sierakowski

Booking for this Festival

**Keynote presentations – Tarnuk Room
(Saturday 16th August)**

<https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/71798-banksia-festival-2025>

Guided Banksia tours in the Australian garden

<https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/cranbourne-gardens/whats-on-cranbourne/free-australian-garden-walk/>

Guided Tour of the RBGV Cranbourne Special Collections

<https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/73127-banksia-festival-2025-walks-bookings>

Workshops (Sunday 24 August)

<https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/73128-banksia-festival-2025-workshops-bookings>



Banksia sphaerocarpa var. *pumilio* - Rodger Elliot



Rainbow lorikeet with Banksia - Inga Simpson

Acting President's Report - Rosemary Miller

Dear Friends,

A great start has been made to 2025 by the Cranbourne Friends as well as by the Royal Botanic Gardens at Cranbourne

Our wonderful Growing Friends Autumn Plant Sale took place in beautiful weather in March, and a total of \$38,400 was collected from the event, including \$5000 from members' purchases on several Thursdays prior to the weekend. The Botanical Fabricators and Botanical Illustrators also had a successful sale, with many lovely items going to new owners.

The Plant Sale is now set up using both sides of the kiosk building, with plants at the east end and with payment/membership and artistic stalls at the west end. Nearly everything is now under cover so showers of rain can be ignored. The renovation and extension of the kiosk building has been a great boon, with flexible facilities now provided that can be used by the RBGV learning team or for weddings, and then another day become a plant sale venue. Naturally, of course, the kiosk is very handy for that essential coffee.

The Growing Friends team are to be congratulated on further improving the payment side of the sale, by ensuring visitors have a defined path to travel that allows them to pay for their plants and then check out craft items should they wish to do so, in an efficient flow-through design.

This event was closely followed by the RBGV's first Lightfall event which was extremely popular during the April school holidays. This event saw the Australian Garden adorned at night with lights which made many

familiar items look quite dramatic. Garden elements looking stunning in the nocturnal display included the Red Sand Garden, the Fig trees and Lily Pad Bridge and the Big Bandicoot sculpture.

Another pleasing aspect of the Lightfall event is that holding it at the Cranbourne Gardens was greatly supported and valued by the Casey Council. Elected Mayor and Councillors are performing regular duties after an Administration period.

While all of this has been going on, the Special Interest Groups have restarted for the year:

- Weaving Circles meet on fourth Sundays
- Friends in the Garden (FIGS) are active in the Australian Garden on first and third Tuesdays
- Fabricators meet for sewing and craft on the second Tuesdays
- Illustrators meet on the first and third Wednesdays
- Growing Friends propagate plants (and sell plants to members) on Thursdays
- The FIF photography group meet on the second Saturdays.

Find out more about these groups in this magazine and on our website:

<https://rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au/>

Furthermore, the Cranbourne Friends are planning a number of special events and trips this year. Please check pages 2-3 of this magazine and your regular Quicklink monthly email.

Bookings for events can be made at:

<https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events>



Plant Sale photos
Autumn Plant Sale, March 2025
Photos: Barbara Jeffrey

Grampians Wildflower Tour 2025

Tour Leaders: Jill Burness and Helen Morrow

Botanical Guides: Wendy and Neil Marriott

The Grampians region holds 30% of the State's native plants and is recognised as a biodiversity hotspot. This tour will showcase the spectacular display of Grampians native plants during their peak flowering season in Spring.

Please express your interest, as this trip is first in best dressed – there are limited spaces available. After 30 people have registered, we will create a waitlist for any cancellations or change of minds.

Our wildflower walks will explore a range of habitats, including the woody heathland of Heatherlie Quarry, the rocky outcrops and dry heathland of Mt Zero/Flat Rock, and the riparian zone of the

MacKenzie River. You will be one of the first people to visit WAMA's newly-opened National Centre for Environmental Art and the associated Grampians/Gariwerd Endemic Botanic Garden. This young botanic collection of rare, endangered and critically endangered Grampians species will be in full bloom. We will visit the Pomonal Community Nursery that is recovering from the devastating fires of February 2024 and help them with some weeding, followed by a delicious afternoon tea or wine tasting at the Pomonal Estate (costs included in the tour).





We will visit two quite-different private gardens that showcase Australian native plants, including “Wartook Gardens” (owned by Jan & Royce Raleigh), and “Grannes” (owned by Glenda and Greg Lewin). Just outside of Stawell is the bushland property of Neil and Wendy Marriott in the Black Hills Range. Panrock Ridge has 14 hectares of grevilleas, banksias, eucalypts and many collections of Australian native plants. Neil holds the official living collection of grevilleas with the ANPSA Grevillea Study Group, and is the curator of the official Plants Trust Australia Grevillea collection. This property is visited regularly by the horticultural staff at the Cranbourne Gardens to take cuttings and propagate a broad range of Australian native species for the Australian Garden.

As a grand finale, we will drive to an Australian native flower farm at Laharum that is owned by Josephine Gardner. She is liaising with RBGV Cranbourne Gardens re the Raising Rarity Program and trialling the commercial production of daisy species with Angus Stewart (our patron).

Expression of Interest

Tour Leaders:

Jill Burness and Helen Morrow

Botanical Guides:

Wendy and Neil Marriott

Accommodation:

We are staying at the Silverband Lodge in Halls Gap - a five-minute walk from the centre of town. Catering, accommodation, physical ability considerations and payment details are given on the booking page below.

Costs:

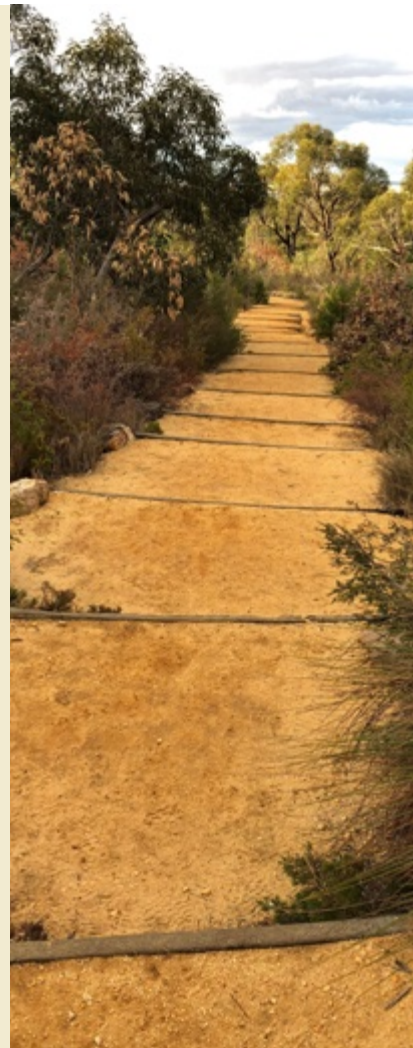
All rooms at Silverband have 4 single beds and an ensuite:

\$915 per person - 4 people per room
\$1,100 per person - 2 people per room
\$1,500 per person – 1 person per room.

This tour is largely booked out but put your name on the waiting list as there may still be vacancies.

To register your interest, please go to:

<https://cranbournefriends.tidyhq.com/public/schedule/events/72166-grampians-wildflower-tour-2025-expressions-of-interest>





Tim Sansom
Executive Director
Living Collections and
Environment

Introducing Tim Sansom – New Executive Director, Living Collections and Environment

It is with great excitement and a deep sense of purpose that I step into the role of Executive Director, Living Collections and Environment, at the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria. To be entrusted with the stewardship of the Gardens' living collections, landscapes and environmental programs—particularly here at Cranbourne Gardens, a place I have long admired—is both a privilege and a responsibility I take to heart.

My background spans horticulture, landscape restoration, nursery innovation, and the intersection of community engagement and ecology. I've spent much of my career championing Australian plants and landscapes—most recently with Australian Ecosystems, and before that with The Diggers Club—working to reconnect people with place through gardens, biodiversity, and seed.

The role of ED Living Collections and Environment has been created as part of the organisational restructure that aims to unify the mission and operation of RBGV across the two sites of Melbourne and Cranbourne, hence this role works across both gardens to champion horticulture and ecology at executive level and across the organisation.

The Australian Garden at Cranbourne is, to my mind, one of the most important public landscapes in the country. It tells bold stories about the Australian environment—its resilience, fragility, beauty and complexity—and brings those stories to life in a way that is both scientifically rigorous and artistically powerful. I'm looking forward to working alongside the dedicated staff, researchers, designers, horticulturists, volunteers and Friends who have shaped this living collection into something truly world-class.

As we face the twin challenges of biodiversity loss and climate change, the role of botanic gardens in science, conservation and public education has never been more important. I see this role as a bridge between the scientific and the sensory, helping people experience and understand the richness of Australia's flora while supporting the research and restoration work that underpins its future.

I'm especially excited by the opportunities ahead—expanding our role in ecological restoration and seedbanking, deepening our work with Traditional Owners, and ensuring the living collections reflect both the cultural and environmental stories of this place. I also look forward to spending time with the Friends of Cranbourne Gardens, whose support, advocacy and passion for this place has always inspired me.

Please come and say hello when you're next in the Gardens—I'd love to hear what this place means to you, and to share ideas for what we can grow together.

Warm regards,

Tim Sansom

Executive Director, Living Collections and Environment
Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria



Photos: RBGV, Cranbourne.

Friend Quiz 20

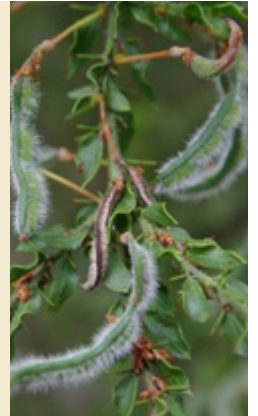
Charles Young

This is Quiz 20 so let's start with a 'decimal question' and proceed from there. Hope you find the quiz topics interesting – good luck and happy learning! Check your answers on page 20.

Q1. What is the origin of the botanical term decussate, which refers to crosswise or X-shaped leaf arrangements such as that shown here for *Melaleuca decussata*?



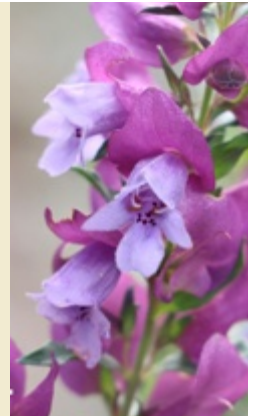
Q2. This spikey wattle is widely planted in parks and gardens. It makes a great hedge because its abundant spines deter trespassers. What are the names of this species and their origins?



Q3. *Acaena novae-zelandiae* or Bidgee-Widgee, notorious for sticking to shoelaces, socks and trousers, belongs to an unexpected plant family. What is that family and what is the probable origin of the common name(s).



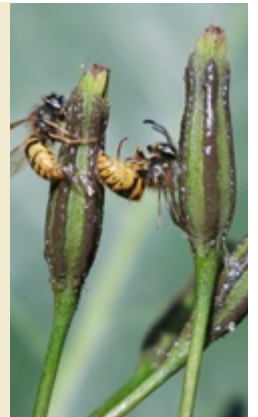
Q4. The light mauve petals and persistent, purple sepals (calyx) are eye-catching features of this magnificent mint bush from WA. What are its scientific and common names?



Q5. The tiny (4 mm) flowers of Mountain Daisy are very popular with florists. What is the generic name, and its origin, of this South Australian/Victorian plant?



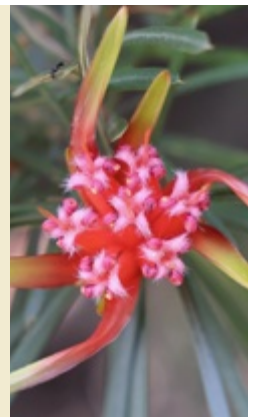
Q6. Birds (and insects and small animals) often fall victim to *Pisonia* (syn. *Ceodes*) species, found in Australia, Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands, and elsewhere. What are some common names for these trees and to what do they allude?



Q7. *Swainsona procumbens*, Broughton Pea, exhibits a remarkable spiral feature (a) in its flower. The parts of such a pea-flower have 'nautical' names. What are the names of parts a, b and c, and what does *procumbens* indicate?



Q8. This is the striking flower of *Lambertia formosa*, commonly known as Honey Flower or Mountain Devil, from coastal and montane NSW. What are the origins of its common names and which state is home to all other *Lambertia* species?



Friends in the Gardens 2025

For three months, our group has focussed on the Zen-style Red Sand Garden. Apart from weeding along the *Chrysocephalum apiculatum* North-South line (did you know the line is 5 degrees off NS), Mathieu Lascostes had a grand plan for our expertise: to rejuvenate the gardens behind the lunettes. This has been a big three-month project for the group.

This involved weeding, the removal of old, straggly shrubs, laying compost, spreading mulch and replanting *Acacia sulcata*. Unfortunately, these gardens are not visible to the general visitor. And, as a picture is worth a thousand words we shall tell the story in pictures.

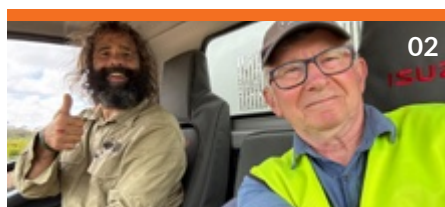
Please note, as volunteers we are treated well. On Shrove Tuesday we had strawberries and pikelets for morning tea! And when we got to Easter there were both chocolate eggs and hot cross buns!



December 2024, weeding the NS line. From front: Andrea Hunt, Maurie Spano, Wendy Herauville, Bill Jones and Dennise Rossetti.



Callen Wheeler and Maurie Spano tidying kangaroo paw in the Dry River Bed (as too hot for work in Red Sand Garden).



The first week of January 2025, Bill Jones and Mathieu Lascostes removed, and trucked away dead and straggly bushes from behind the lunettes.



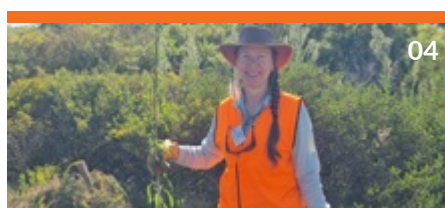
March saw us back in the Red Sand Garden weeding, composting and mulching.



Then, the removal of old compost and mulch and spreading fresh compost on the slopes and gardens. Christine Kenyon, Wendy Herauville, Susan Delaney, Andrea Hunt, Sue Gilbert, Maurie Spano.



April was for planting. Mathieu Lascostes demonstrated planting technique and fifty new *Acacia sulcata* plants filled the gaps.



Weeding! Linda Jones and Dennise Rossetti held a competition to see who could pull the tallest weed (fleabane – *Conyza* sp.).



Job finished 15 April, 2025! Well done everyone!!

In other news, for 2 days in March and April, the group hosted a keen RMIT Conservation and Ecosystem Management diploma student fulfilling her course volunteer requirements. We wish her well.

Acacia sulcata: The original planting design behind the lunettes was for a diverse array of shrubs. *Acacia sulcata* was the species that thrived, whilst many of the others succumbed to the harsh conditions. For this rejuvenation project the Horticulture staff decided to use only *Acacia sulcata*. It was also decided that at the large landscape scale simplicity in planting was important. These shrubs will be just visible over the lunettes.

Acacia sulcata R. Br. (Family Fabaceae) is endemic to the SW corner of Western Australia (Eucla, WA South Coast IMCRA Regions). An often spreading, spindly shrub

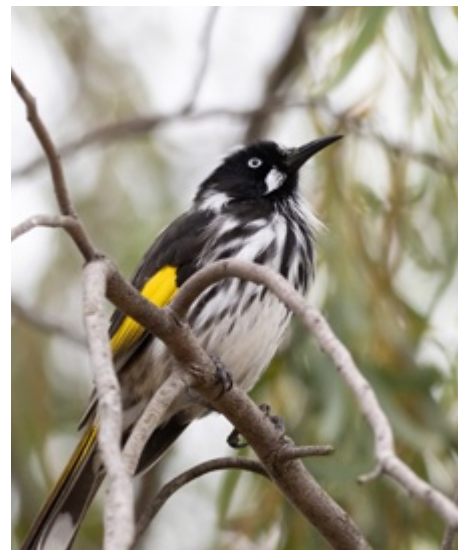
0.2 to ~2 m high, it grows in sand, clay soils, sandy loam, and lateritic soils and is often found on rocky hills and granite outcrops often under tall mallee scrub with eucalypts and casuarinas. The juvenile leaves mature to straight, narrow, glabrous phyllodes. Branchlets have minute hairs and a fine white powdery coating toward the tip. Simple, spherical, yellow flowers occur singly or in pairs in the axils from June to December. The seed pods have a papery to thin leathery texture and are glabrous with a white, powdery coating. The seeds are mottled grey to black or brown coloured. Propagation is from scarified seed or boiling water treatment. Generally adaptable in cultivation, *Acacia sulcata* responds to sunny, well drained positions in most soils and is frost hardy.

Photos: Wendy Herauville, Bill Jones, Christine Kenyon, Mathieu Lascostes.

Friend in Focus

Photography group meets
2nd Saturday of the month, Elliot Centre.

2pm, April to September
(9.30am October to March). Come along



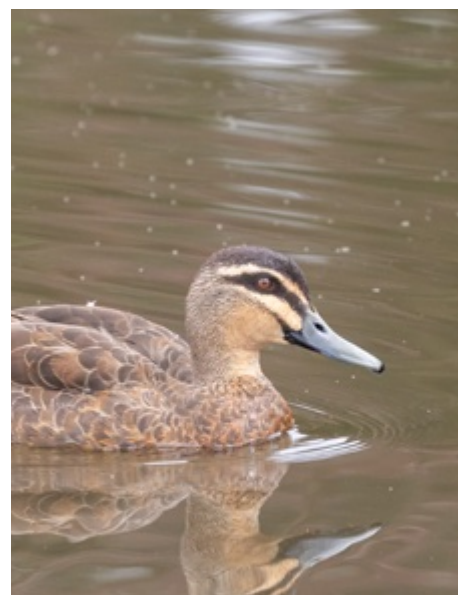
New Holland Honeyeater, beside
Red Sand Garden by Amy Akers



Eastern Spinebill, Arid Garden by Amy Akers



Little Wattlebird beside Red Sand Garden by Amy Akers



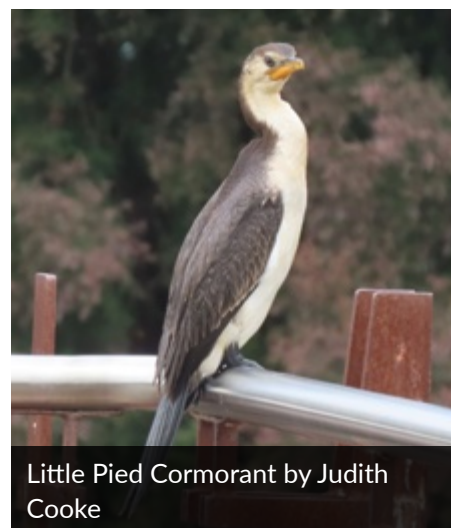
Pacific Black Duck, Ian Potter Lake
Precinc by Amy Akers



Banksia meziesii by Judith Cooke



Grevillea by Judith Cooke



Little Pied Cormorant by Judith Cooke



Scaevola Aemula by Judith Cooke



Southern Brown Bandicoot by Judith Cooke



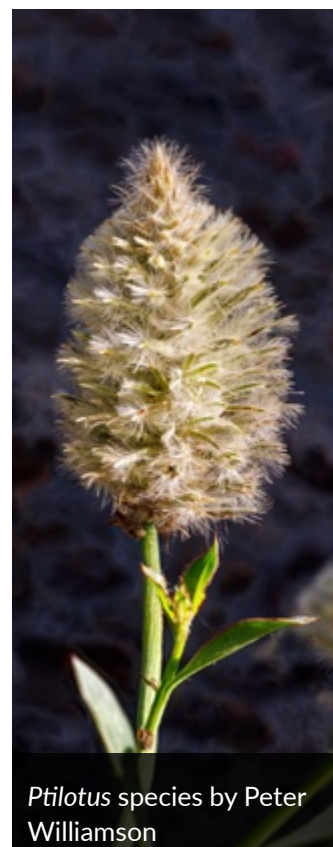
Crowea 'Festival', Eucalypt Walk by Peter Williamson



Spyridium coactilifolium, Butterfly
Spyridium, Ironbark Garden by
Peter Williamson



Eucalyptus cosmophylla, Eucalypt
Walk by Peter Williamson



Ptilotus species by Peter
Williamson

Botanical Weaving

Tess Holderness

We have welcomed a number of new people to our Botanical Weaving gatherings in 2025. It's been great to see some of the more experienced members of our group informally guiding those who are quite new to weaving, with some introductory activities.

Following our 'offsite adventure' to the Basketmakers of Victoria (BoV) at the start of the year, we are continuing to meet on the '4th Sunday' of each month, at the Cranbourne Friends' Elliot Centre. Group members generally bring their personal weaving projects in to work on, and often, some samples of their completed work (or 'works in progress'). This tends to spark some lovely conversations about different techniques and materials.

Examples of various plant fibres are explored, with discussions or demonstrations about their processing and usage. Any surplus materials are often shared within the group. It's good to see an exchange of information and ideas taking place, in addition to the sharing of resources.

After recently attending a 'Paper Flower Making Workshop' (facilitated by fibre artist, Tamara

McCarthy) at the Basketmakers of Victoria, Pam Everson and I brought in some examples of the flowers and the raw materials - a special type of eco-dyed 'paper string', sustainably produced from Birch trees in Finland (see photos). We are currently researching options that can be made from Australian native plant fibres. There are so many ideas and techniques to explore in the realm of weaving, basketmaking and fibre arts.

As a group 'challenge', we are currently learning more about, and exploring the diversity of Banksias - as a source of creative inspiration, and in contemplating what we might be able to work on in the lead up to the Cranbourne Gardens' special 'Banksia Week' in August.

Such discussions about creative expression related to native flora and biodiversity, have highlighted



Examples of 'paper flowers' in the making - utilising a type of 'paper string', sustainably produced from Birch forests in Finland. Created at a Basketmakers of Victoria workshop, facilitated by fibre artist, Tamara McCarthy.

All photos: Tess Holderness

a shared interest amongst many group participants, in both ecology and nature journaling. The concept of collaborating on a booklet about our favourite native plant fibres has been suggested.

This has led on to the idea of organising a couple of workshops with the Queensland based ecologist and nature journaling facilitator, Dr Paula Peeters (www.paperbarkwriter.com), to coincide with her upcoming trip to Melbourne in September. More details to come in future Cranbourne Friends communications.

For any new weaving group enquiries (or to register an Expression of Interest in attending a Nature Journaling workshop), you are welcome to contact Tess at weaving@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Growing Friends

Marjanne Rook

growing.friends@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Successful Autumn Plant Sale – What a wonderful plant Sale we had – beautiful weather, beautiful plants, many customers and a record sale. We hit the \$39,000 mark. Thank you to our members of whom many are regular customers.

Although the Spring Plant Sale is still many months away, we are planning to have yet another great selection of plants which includes a few large plants for a garden or large pot.



***Lagorostrobus franklinii* - Huon Pine.** \$200.00 - 40cm diam pot, 2m high - about 8 years old. This beautiful slow growing but long-lived conifer is native to Tasmania. It is a beautiful pine with arching branches and pendulous branchlets. It will make a wonderful specimen in your garden or large pot in a cool and moist and a semi-shaded position. 1 only.



***Prumnopitys ladei* – Mount Spurgeon Black Pine.** \$120.00 - 35cm diam pot and 1.5m high. An evergreen Australian Native pine variety, hailing from North Queensland. This pine variety has stiff and light-green glossy fern-like foliage in a herringbone pattern that develops in an upright growth habit. Stunning in formal landscaping, container growing or feature gardening. Adapts to cooler climate zones and can be happily potted up and used as a gorgeous living Christmas Tree alternative indoors in a well-lit location. 1 only.



***Backhousia citriodora* – Lemon Myrtle.** \$120.00. 30cm diam pot – 1m high.

It is one of the most popular native food plants. Add the leaves whole, dry or powdered to your food and make teas to get the health benefits. Creamy flowers in summer that attract native insects and honey bees. Very attractive garden plant and suitable for screening. Prefers a sheltered position. 1 only



***Adenanthos sericeous* – Woolly Bush.** \$80.00 - 30cm diam pot with a height of 0.8m.

Grows into a large shrub and makes a great feature plant with lovely, soft to touch foliage. Compact habit and can be hedged – it is sometimes used as a Christmas tree if grown in a large container. Can reach 5m. Prefers a sunny position. 1 only.

***Rhododendron viriosum* -** \$70.00 – 30cm diam pot and H0.7m x W0.8m.

Gorgeous red flowers. Dappled shade would be perfect. 2 only.

Interested?

Contact growing.friends@rbgfriendscranbourne.org.au

Nursery Open.

Did you miss the March Plantsale? Not to worry, we still have many plants to choose from. As always, the Growing Friends nursery is open to Members on Thursdays from 10.00am – 2.00pm.

Falls Creek Wildflower Adventure Tour, 15 to 20 January 2025

by Peter McGrath

The Cranbourne Friends organised a Falls Creek Wildflower Adventure Tour from 15 to 20 January 2025. The tour was lucky enough to have Neville Walsh, former RBGV Senior Conservation Botanist and Friends life member, and Alexandra Stalder, an alpine plant enthusiast and chief organiser, as leaders.

The accommodation at the Howmans Gap Alpine Discovery Camp, operated by the YMCA, proved a very hospitable offering: good beds, meals and facilities. It was a good location to access the key features of the area. Meal-times were a place for catching up with friends and making new ones after a day of exploring.

The program of activities was interesting, and included the following:

- Rocky Valley Aqueduct
- Wallace Hut
- Mount Cope
- Big River Firetrail
- Mount Nelse (the third tallest mountain in Victoria)
- Mount McKay Summit
- Pretty Valley Pondage followed by a walk up into the Pole 333 area
- Montane Walk in the forest at Howman's Gap
- Swims in Rocky Valley Creek and Rocky Valley Dam

The program was busy and varied accommodating different skill levels and interests. There was something for everyone.



Neville's careful explanations of the plants found and his light manner were much appreciated. Neville would often preface an identification with the following words: "when I named this plant ..." This next photo is a lovely illustration of Neville explaining a plant identification to the group.

Thanks are due to both Alex and Neville for providing an inspiring and well-crafted experience, catering for everyone's needs and abilities and making it fun for everyone at the same time. The Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria plays a leading role in the conservation of plants.

This trip was a wonderful exposition of the native plants of Falls Creek, and there was some commentary that the quantity of plants has been improved by the absence of grazing in the high country. In addition to the absence of grazing from cattle (and horses) there has been a run of good seasons since the 2019-20 fire season. Even the devastation of the 2003 Alpine fires that burnt most of the area leaving gaunt dead snowgum trunks is gradually being covered by the new growth from the surviving lignotubers though that won't be complete for another 20 fire free years.

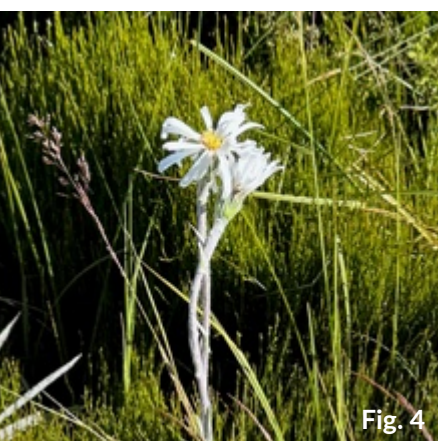


Fig. 4



Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

Some Botanical Highlights

Of course, the reason for the trip was to see the plants of the High Country. I think we have all had our favourites. Those that I have included here are probably just some personal favourites that really caught my eye.

Neville named quite a few of the plants. He is also one of the main authorities listed in Vicflora (<https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/flora/search?q=%2a>) for many of the plants that we saw. We were indeed fortunate to have with us someone who had worked with the National Herbarium of Victoria since 1977.

Figure 4 is *Celmisia pugioniformis* (Slender Snow Daisy). The plant is the most widespread *Celmisia* in Victoria occurring in subalpine and alpine herbfields, heaths and Sphagnum bogs, and subalpine woodlands almost throughout the Snowfields with a remarkably disjunct occurrence near Mt William in the Grampians (<https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/flora/taxon/1f51b614-3266-40be-ab94-de70ff59e429>).

Figure 5 is *Brachyscome rigidula* (Leafy Daisy). This plant ranges from rocky herbfield and shrubland of alpine areas (e.g. Mts Bogong, Hotham and Higginbotham) to subalpine grassland (e.g. *Themeda* grassland above Lake Omeo) and open eucalypt forest (<https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/flora/taxon/8ba00683-c8f0-4e2e-97d7-53a7614b1253>).

Figure 6 is *Leucochrysum alpinum* (Alpine Sunray). This plant's distribution is restricted to the higher peaks around Mounts Nelse, Bogong, Hotham and Howitt (<https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/flora/taxon/46a0af8c-183b-4663-9028-0b434b6dcd82>).

Figure 7 is *Xerochrysum subundulatum* (Orange or Alpine Everlasting). The plant is moderately common in moist alpine herblands and grasslands (<https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/flora/taxon/0f6dd967-150f-40d3-806a-9fd446125e5a>).

Figure 8 is *Craspedia aurantia* var. *aurantia* (Orange Billy-button). The orange flower is common in grasslands at higher subalpine areas and adjacent uplands (<https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/flora/taxon/b8aee799-4021-416b-90c9-193998d2bd41>).

Figure 9 is *Podolepis laciniata* (High-plain Podolepis). This plant is mostly in grassy habitats near the treeline (mostly *Eucalyptus pauciflora*, or below. The altitude range is 1200 to 1700 m (<https://vicflora.rbg.vic.gov.au/flora/taxon/2ccc8a2f-2699-49ae-9758-5af1104fb7f3>).

Summary

This trip was a joyful experience where we enjoyed good weather and company in search of the delights of the alpine flora. We were well fed and led. The trip was a wonderful example of closer cooperation between the two sites with an expert from Melbourne guiding the Friends of Cranbourne. It was a delightful experience.

Answers to Friend Quiz 20 on page 11

A1. Decussate comes from the Latin word *decem* "ten" (which also gives decimal, decade, decathlon, December etc). Latin *decussis* refers to "the figure ten," X in Roman numerals, like the arrangement of decussate leaves (when viewed along the stem).

A2. This is *Acacia paradoxa*, from Greek *paradoxos* "contrary to expectations" (from *para* "contrary" + *doxa* "expectation") because it "differs in its foliage from several in this section [*Mimosa*?]" (not from *para* "near" + *doxa* "glory/splendour," for its beauty). The common name, Hedge Wattle, reflects a common use.

A3. The plant is in the Rosaceae (Rose) family. It goes by many names (some swear words), most probably stemming from corruptions of the Māori name Piri-Piri, which became Bidi-Bidi, Bidgee-Widgee and so on.

A4. This is the aptly named *Prostanthera magnifica* or Magnificent Prostanthera. The specific epithet is Latin for "splendid/magnificent," in reference to the large, attractive flowers.

A5. The genus is *Ixodia*, from the Greek *ixodes* "like birdlime," from *ixos* "birdlime" and *-o(i)des* "resembling." Birdlime is a sticky substance spread on twigs to catch small birds. The name alludes to the sticky foliage of *I. achillaeoides* (pictured).

A6. They go by names like Birdlime Tree, Bird Catch(er) Tree and Catchbirdtree. The seed pods are very sticky and can trap, immobilize and/or ground birds, leading to their deaths. Indigenous people also use the plants to catch birds for feathers or food (see A5).

A7. The flower has 5 irregular petals whimsically named for a sailing ship; two joined on the upper edge to form a keel (a), two wings (b) and a standard or banner (c). Latin *procumbens* indicates a procumbent or ground-covering habit.

A8. The flower is nectarivorous and honey-scented (hence Honey Flower) and the horned, woody follicle resembles a devil's head (hence Mountain Devil). The ten other species are found way over in Southwest WA!

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