



Australian Plants Society Armidale & District Group

PO Box 735 Armidale NSW 2350

web: <http://www.aps-armidale.org.au>
e-mail: apsarmidale@gmail.com

Crowea exalata ssp magnifolia
image by Maria Hitchcock

Winter Edition 2021 – 3



Banksia coccinea - Photo by Terry Dunham

In this issue:

Office bearers for 2021	.....p2
Editorial	.....p2
Facebook site for plant ID	.....p3
Gravel mulch	.....p3
Transplantin/Germinating Hakes	.....p4
Central west trip in October	.....p5
How to tell the sex of a Pee Wee	.....p5
Some funnies	.....p6
Prostanthera species named	.....p10
Kristine Gow Life Membership	.....p11
Fred Rogers Seminar	.....p12
FOR YOUR DIARY	.....p14

Contact Us:

Armidale & District Group

PO Box 735, Armidale NSW 2350

President: Vacant

Vice President: Colin Wilson

Secretary: Penelope Sinclair Ph. 6771 5639

apsarmidale@gmail.com

Treasurer: Phil Rose Ph. 67753767

prosecarwell@bigpond.com

Membership: Phil Rose Ph. 67753767

prosecarwell@bigpond.com

Markets in the Mall, Outings, OHS & Environmental Officer and Arboretum Coordinator:

Patrick Laher Ph. 0427327719 patricklaher@yahoo.com.au

Newsletter Editor: John Nevin Ph. 67752128 jrnevin@nsw.chariot.net.au

Meet and Greet: Lee Horsley Ph. 0421381157 ghorsley@une.edu.au

Afternoon Tea: Deirdre Waters Ph. 67753754 deirdre@ipstar.com.au

From the Editor John Nevin

As we approach mid Winter, the COVID-19 saga continues, with public health measures limiting the social interaction of all of us as we deal with the more contagious variant of the virus that is running amok in Sydney. The solution is very obvious – we all need to make sure that we are immunised as it is unlikely that we will ever be free of this virus. There is ample evidence now that the vaccine greatly reduces our risk of hospitalisation and death, as well as reducing the spread of the virus.

With eight billion people on earth clamoring for two shots of the vaccine, we face a while in the queue while awaiting vaccine supplies to meet this enormous demand. Buy shares in Pfizer! We can be thankful that we have not been overrun (yet) by COVID unlike other countries such as the UK, France, Italy, Spain, USA, Indonesia, India and South America.

The AGM of the State body (APS-NSW) was held recently, and John Aitken retired from the Presidency after five years of good service. Under his presidency, a five year plan was launched which has resulted in many efficiencies, such as the greater use of the website with regional groups also able to make use of the APS-NSW website. The Sydney office has been closed and greater use made of digital administration resulting in significant savings. The State newsletter is now fully digitised and distributed by email with savings in printing and postage. We now have regular quarterly meetings to promote interaction between regional groups.

Our new President is Heather Miles and she has hit the ground running. A planning meeting was held at Parramatta in mid June during a hiatus in the COVID-19 pandemic. Barbara and I travelled down for this. Unfortunately we were only able to attend on the Saturday as we had to be back in Armidale on the Sunday for the Gala concert of the Eisteddfod which we were involved in organising. The meeting has laid out a five year plan to guide the society for the next half decade. I raised the issue of digitising Australian Plants with a view to making significant savings in printing and postage. We are in the digital age and need to move with it. The Medical Journal of Australia, which I have been receiving for fifty years, issued its last paper version at the end of June and all issues will now be digital and email delivered.

It was good to make contact with Kristine Gow from the Southern Highlands Group, and formerly a member of the Armidale Group. Kristine was recently awarded life membership of APS-NSW. Many of our local members will remember Kris as an enthusiastic gardener and propagator and she has carried this enthusiasm into the Southern Highlands. Congratulations on a well deserved award.

Another Plant Source to ID Plants **From the East Hills Newsletter**

The possibility of developing an APP for the identification of Australian Plants was raised at the President's Workshop. With the evolution of Facebook, this is now much easier and several people recommended a Facebook Group "**NSW Native Plant Identification**".

This group is a place where people can upload their photos of plants that they wish to have identified. It is both public in that anyone can see who is in the group and what they post, and accessible as anyone may join the group. It is based in NSW and the Administrator of the site is Joel Cohen, who is the Biodiversity Sampling Technical Officer at the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney, and Herbarium Support Officer at the National Herbarium of NSW. It is a reputable source of information with over 9,000 members and you will recognise many names of people helping with identifications and hints.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/332752936930981>

Gravel Mulch **from Phillip Vaughan's Facebook Site**

One of the most common questions we are asked by people who come to our nursery and garden is "why do you mulch with gravel?" There are a number of reasons.

1. The nature of stone is that when rain lands on the surface of the rock, it easily finds its way down to the soil. In areas where rainfall can be low and infrequent, this is very important. When gardens are mulched with any of the woodchip materials, usually to a depth of 50-100 mm, a 5 mm shower can only wet the top layer of chips. Another common fault, with the bark style, is that 'caking' can occur. This is where the chips form a layer that mats together in a waterproof barrier.
2. Stone tends to hold the heat. A 1-2 degrees warmth difference, when looking at the minimum tolerance that a plant can withstand, is huge. A minus 2 degrees Celsius, coming back to somewhere nearer to 0 degrees Celsius, can make a massive difference for the plant's survival.

3. Stone doesn't break down and therefore doesn't need topping up as regularly. A possible downside is that there is no organic matter passed onto the soil unlike that of wood chip. With stone mulch, we add any fertiliser in an inorganic form (eg osmocote).
4. Birds scratch wood chips everywhere, onto paths and lawns. This is not a problem with gravel.
5. With the huge range of colours, textures and sizes available in rock, there is usually a look that suits most native gardens.
6. Finally, in a region where bushfires may be an issue, stone material will never burn.

Obviously there are pros and cons, as to what style of mulch is applied. The purpose of any mulch is to retain moisture, help with weed suppression, keep the soil temperature constant and to add to the aesthetic look of the garden.

Our choice is gravel for the above reasons. Everybody has an opinion as to what they are going to use, and therefore nobody is wrong. It is their opinion to suit their own eye and their own garden.

Transplanting or germinating Hakeas

by Paul Kennedy, Leader of Hakea Study Group

To transplant Hakeas, you can pull them up, trim the roots if necessary, plant into a pot filled with a good potting mix of low phosphorous, place a plastic bag over for two weeks and keep moist.

To germinate Hakeas, put a seed between toilet paper on a plastic lid and keep just moist inside a closed plastic bag. Keep above 15 degrees C and they can germinate in less than a week.

(This germination method was pioneered by the late Max Ewer from SW Victoria who had a magnificent garden especially of Hakeas. He used to grow Hakeas for the annual South Australian APS Plant Sale at Adelaide. Max got into cultivation a hybrid Hakea that came up in his garden that he named Hakea 'Stockdale Sensation'. Stockdale was the maiden surname of his late wife whom he wished to commemorate.)

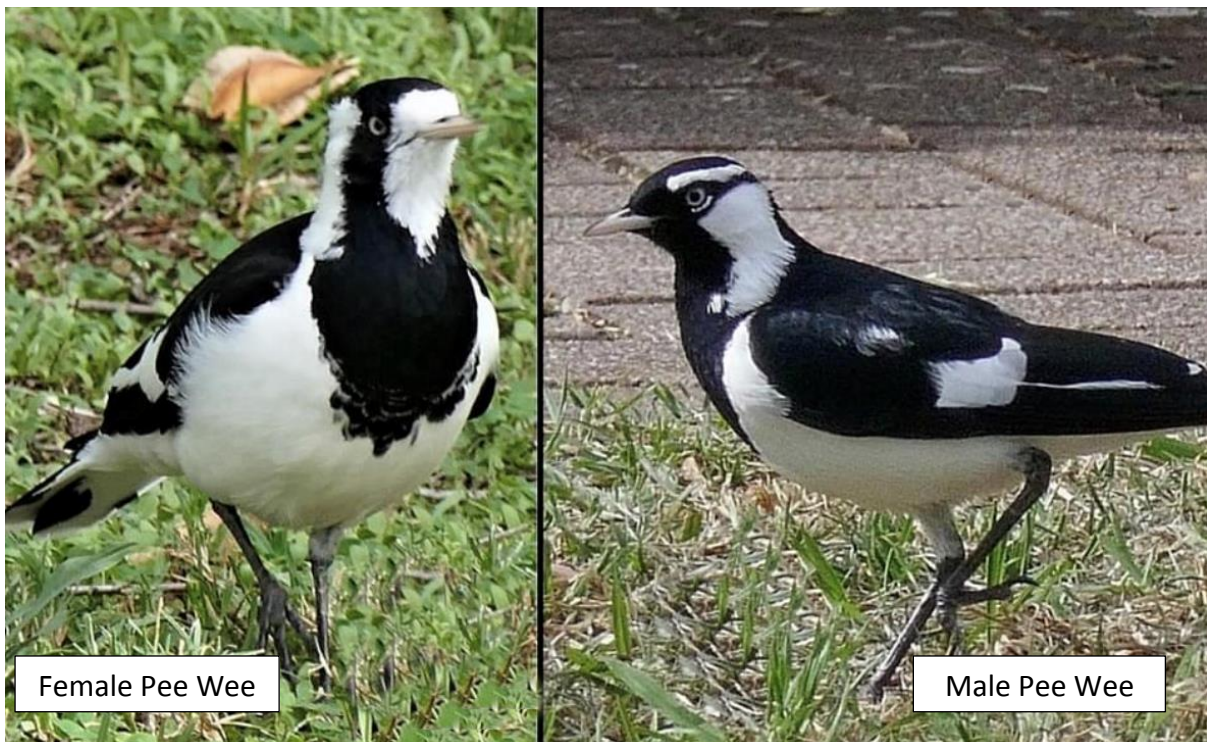
A Trip to the Central West in October

John Aitken is organising a four day APS trip to the **Central West** for 15-18th October. The program includes visits to **Burrendong Botanic Garden and Arboretum** near Wellington, **Dubbo Botanic Garden**, **Taronga Western Plains Zoo** and the **Knop property at Narromine**. APS members Andrew and Jennifer Knop have regenerated their property at Narromine by eliminating feral animal and weeds.

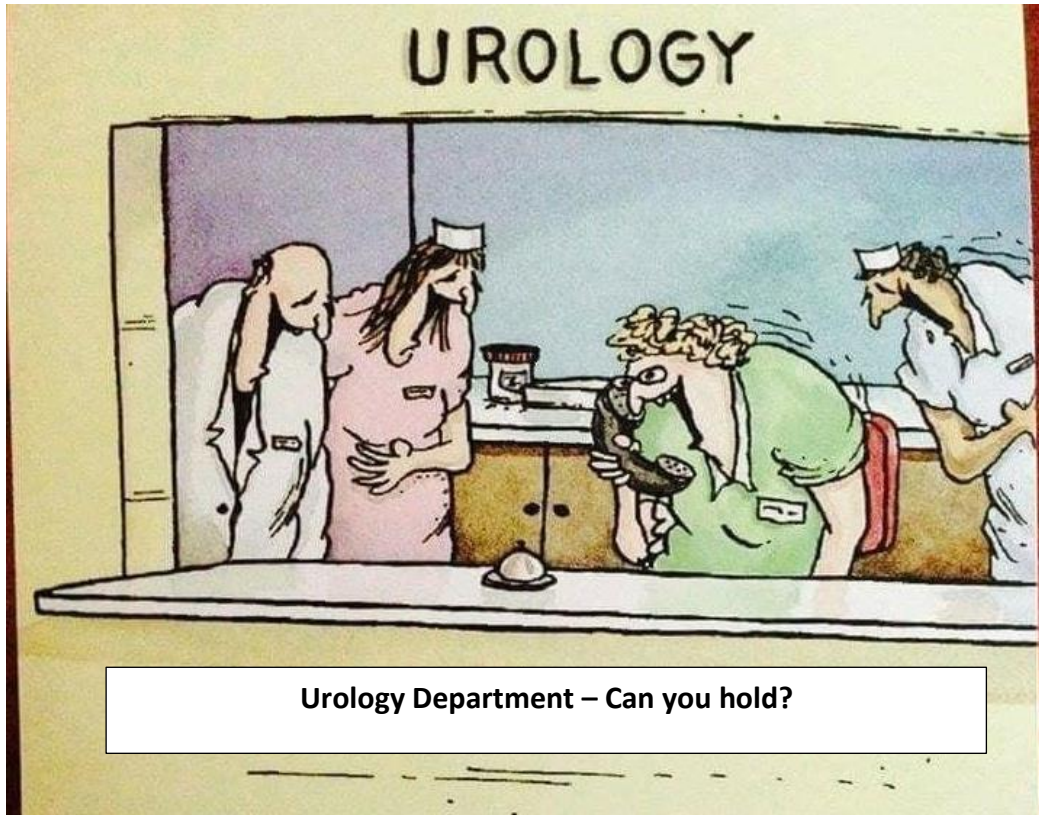
Andrew gave a Zoom presentation to APS-NSW last year sharing his and Jennifer's experiences on regenerating their two properties in western NSW. You can see his presentation on the [APS NSW You Tube Channel](#).

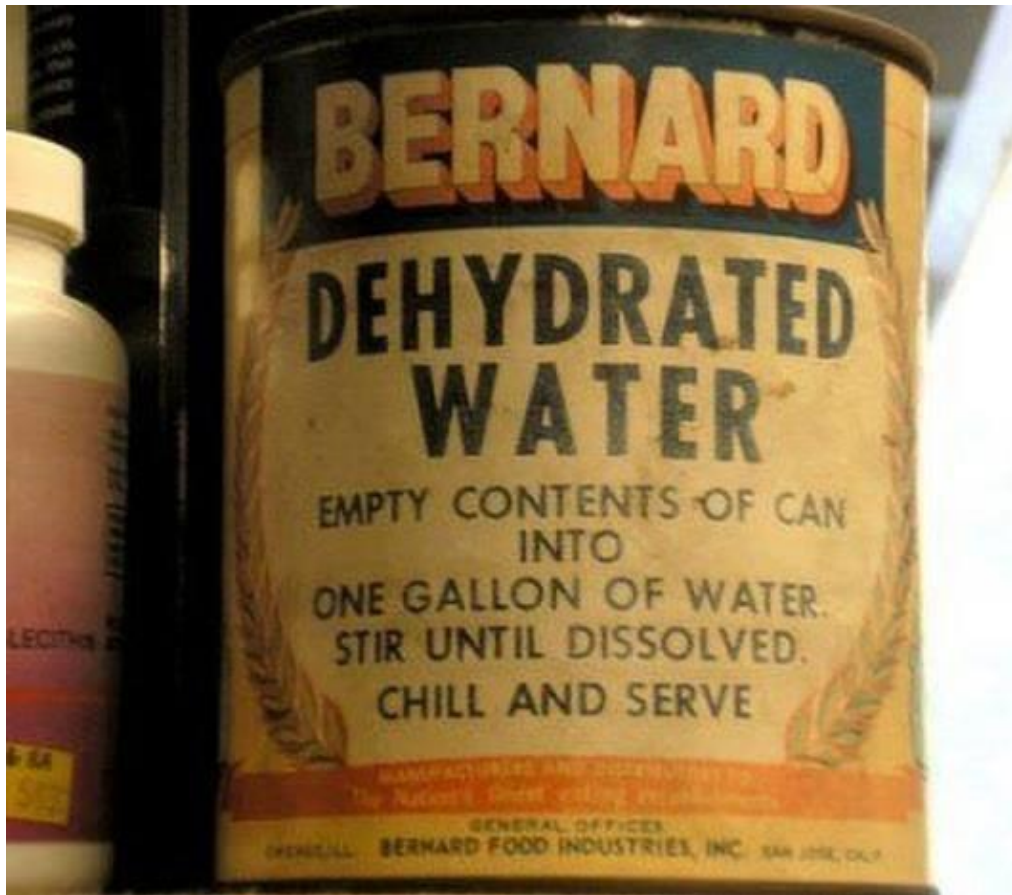
How do you tell the gender of a Pee Wee? By John Nevin

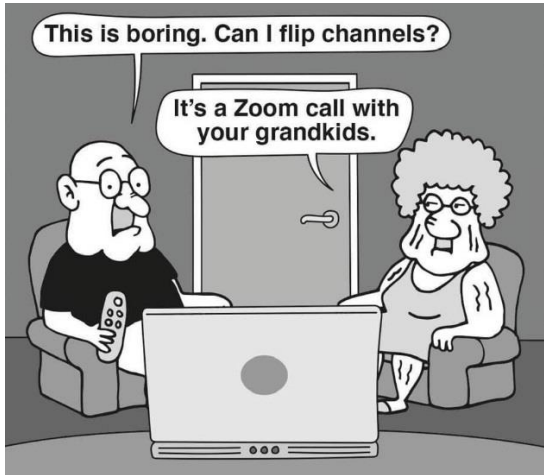
Magpie Larks or Pee wees have different markings: **Boy – Black Face; Girl – White Face**



Some Funnies



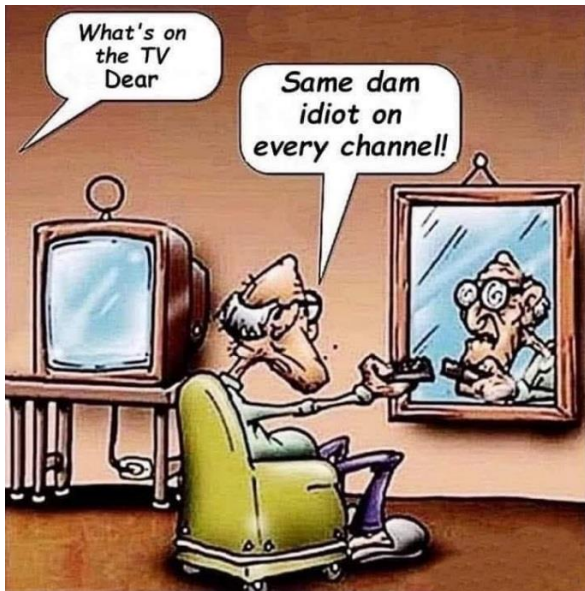




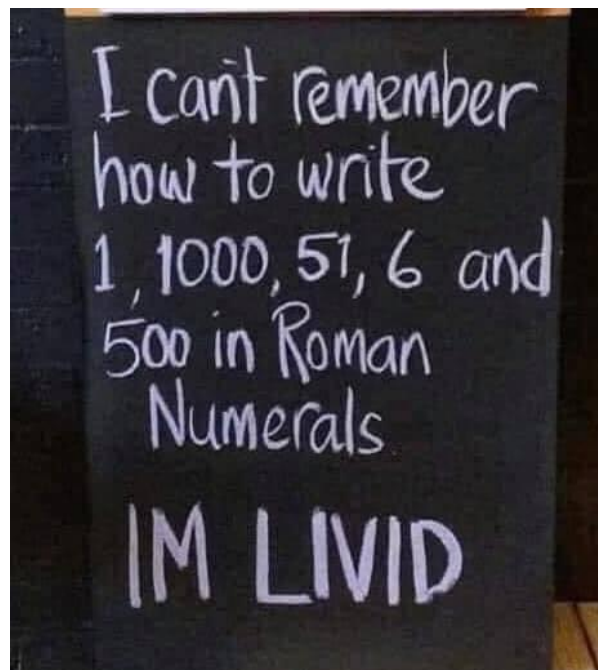
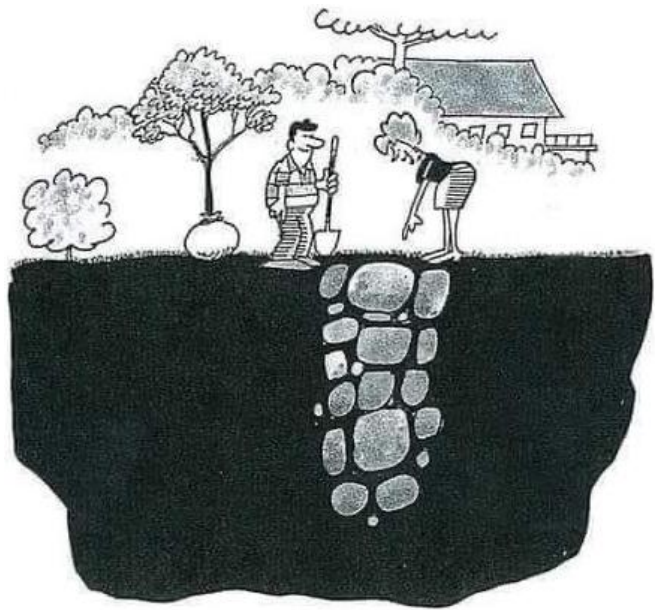
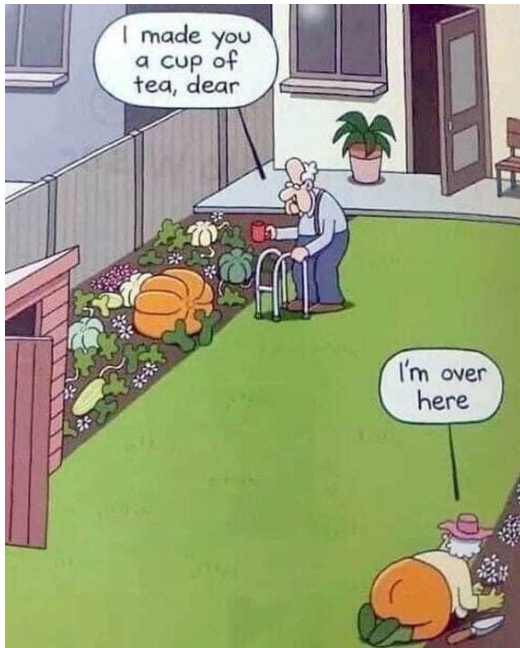
Are you Zoomed out with COVID-19?



Ever notice how owners resemble their pets?



The Germinator



Some NT *Prostanthera* species named at last by John Nevin

For some years we have been aware of mint bushes growing on the Northern Tablelands that do not fit into any species description although they have features in common with described species. Several of these were somewhat similar to *Prostanthera lasianthos* and have been identified by a locality name eg *Prostanthera aff. lasianthos* ‘Wollomombi Falls’.

A recent paper in Australian Systematic Botany by B. J. Conn *et al.* has discussed these and provided a name for some of them at last. This is a step towards sorting out the mint bushes, the taxonomy of which has been a real mess and badly in need of a lot of work to sort them out. I am sure that we will see a lot of papers from the taxonomists in the coming years as they apply themselves to this job.

The paper is quite lengthy and involved, so I will give a summary of those that now are named.

1. *Prostanthera largiflorens*

This plant has been known for some years as *Prostanthera lasianthos* ‘New England smooth-leaved’ variant. It grows at Banksia Point in the New England National Park and is a small tree up to seven metres high. The flowers are some of the largest in the *Prostanthera* group and are white in colour. It flowers around about early summer and is hardy to drought and frost. Like most of the mint bushes, it propagates readily from cuttings.

2. *Prostanthera williamsii*

This plant has been known for years as *Prostanthera lasianthos* ‘Wollomombi Gorge’. It grows on rocky cliff tops and sides of river gorges and has been known from Edgar’s Lookout at Wollomombi and at Apsley Falls. It grows as a shrub from one to two metres high. Flowers are white and appear in early summer. The plant is hardy to both frost and drought and propagates readily from cuttings. Many of us have been growing it for years and it has been available through the Tree Group. It has been named after one of our former APS members, the late John Williams, who had recognised this plant as a possible new species distinct from *Prostanthera lasianthos*.

3. *Prostanthera rupicola*

This plant has also been known to us for some time. It has been known as *Prostanthera lasianthos* ‘Donnybrook’ or ‘Giraween/Polblue variant’. We have known it from the Roberts Range and the Donnybrook State Forest as well as the Giraween area in the border granites. It is an upright shrub two to three metres in height with white flowers that may be pale mauve. It flowers in early summer and is hardy to drought and frost. It propagates easily from cuttings. Many of us have this

plant in cultivation and I have seen it available from the tree group and in Richardson's Hardware nursery. The name *rupicola* indicates its propensity to grow in rocky locations.

4. *Prostanthera subalpina*

This one grows in the Snowy Mountains in protected gullies and along watercourses. It has been known for some time to have some similarity with *Prostanthera lasianthos* but to have some differences, such as a longer petiole and longer, more narrow leaf. It is a spreading shrub one and a half to two metres in height with white to pale mauve flowers. Like the others, it flowers in early summer. It is hardy to drought and frost (not surprisingly with its location), and is easy to propagate from cuttings. I do not know of anyone from our group growing this plant. It may be more readily available from the south of the state or from Victoria. The name reflects the high elevation habitat for the plant.

5. *Prostanthera lasiangustata*

This mint varies from *P. lasianthos* by having a shorter petiole and a more narrow leaf. It is a spreading shrub up to four metres high. Flowers are pale mauve and can be somewhat hairy. Flowering time is early summer. It grows on rocky cliffs, open ridge tops and the sides of gorges in and around the Nattai National Park and the Blue Mountains National Park. The naming reflects the woolly features (*lasi-*) and the narrow leaves (*angustus* = narrow).

There still remains some work to be done, as the Mount Kaputar *aff. lasianthos* mint bush has yet to be named. Similarly, the Grampians *var. subcoriacea* mint, with its thick leaves, that grows on Mount William has not been split off. The other one that grows from Gloucester Tops to the NSW-Qld border has also yet to be formally named.

Kristine Gow - Life Membership of APS NSW by John Nevin

Many of us will remember Kristine Gow who was a member of our group for some years and was an enthusiastic and talented grower of Australian plants. She opened her garden at Rocky River (Heights) to the public on behalf of our APS group on several occasions. After retirement from the Police Force, Kris and Lloyd moved to the Southern Highlands and more recently moved into Bowral.

There she has continued to be an enthusiastic propagator of plants and became to President of the local APS group. Her contribution was recognised at the AGM of APS – NSW where she was awarded Life Membership of the society after being nominated by the Southern Tablelands group.

Kris tells me she is delighted to be a 'lifer' (Police Parlance) and it is certainly deserved recognition of her enthusiastic work for Australian plants.

Well done Kris.



Kris Gow with President John Aitken, May 2021

It is also important to acknowledge the contribution of John Aitken to APS NSW. He stood down at the last AGM after five years as President. He has carried an enormous workload and the five year plan that he instituted has borne fruit with many improvements in the running of the society. These will be carried on in the next five years, as I will report next newsletter, as a recent review is taking forward the agenda for change and efficiencies to the next five years. Well done John Aitken.

Fred Rogers Seminar by John Nevin

Every two years, APS Victoria run the FJC Rogers Seminar. This is run over a weekend and a plant group is selected for further examination. Over the years, plant groups covered include Grevilleas, Hakeas, Wattles, Orchids, Prostantheras, Goodeniaceae and many others. The event is hosted by a regional group in Victoria and the format consists of lectures, workshops on many aspects from cultivation/grafting/photography etc. There are visits to local gardens of interest and a plant sale of the plant group under discussion is held.

This is a great learning opportunity and a chance to network with others from around Australia with an interest in Australian Plants. Barbara and I have been to over half a dozen of these seminars and have greatly enjoyed them.

The last one was restricted by COVID lockdowns. However, by October next year, we should be freed up even if not yet doing overseas travel. So put this one in your diary for October 2022.



Fabulous Peas 2022

FJC Rogers Biennial Seminar

15th - 16th October 2022

Discover the extraordinary world of Australian pea plants.

Saturday York on Lilydale, Mount Evelyn

Speakers with expertise in identifying, growing and propagating peas. Learn about current research into propagation and growing-on techniques. Evening dinner and an entertaining speaker.

Plant sales of common and unusual pea species. Book sales. Displays. Raffle.

Sunday Coach tours to public and private native gardens which include a wide variety of pea species.

Art exhibition and sale featuring pea plants from 8th – 16th October at Karwarra Australian Botanic Garden. Plant sales.

Expressions of interest: fabulouspeas2022@gmail.com

<https://apsvic.org.au/fjc-rogers-seminar-2022/>

Hosted: Australian Plants Society Maroondah Inc.

For your diary

Saturday 21st August – Visits to two gardens.

The first will be at the Horseley's, 3 Hillview Road at 10 am with a BYO morning tea to give members a chance to meet and chat. A tour of the garden will start about 10.30 am. We will later move next door to the Shephard's at 7 Hillview Road.

Friday 27th August – Arboretum Working Bee

Start at 9am. Bring morning tea and garden tools.

Sunday 29th August – Wattle Day Lunch.

This will be held at the Wicklow Hotel at 1pm following the Markets in the Mall. No need to book as the meal arrangements are flexible.

Sunday 29th August – Markets in the Mall

Friday 24th September – Arboretum Working Bee

Start at 9am. Bring morning tea and garden equipment to prune, plant, rake etc.

Sunday 26th September – Markets in the Mall

Saturday 9th October – Attila Kapitarny Forum

This will deal with Australian Succulents and Drought Hardy Plants. This will be held at the Armidale City Bowling Club and the Top Room has been booked.

Open 1.30pm; First lecture 1.45pm – 2.45pm

Afternoon Tea, chat and book sales 2.45pm – 3.30pm

Second lecture 3.30pm – 4.30pm

APS Armidale 2021 Winter

Close 5pm. Dinner at Bistro afterwards. Members to make own bookings for this.

On the Sunday, Maria Hitchcock has volunteered to open her garden for the registrants.

Friday 29th October – Arboretum Working Bee

Start at 9am – bring garden tools and morning tea.

Sunday 31st October – Markets in the Mall

Saturday 20th November – Annual General Meeting

This is our end of year activity, AGM and plant swap. This will be held at the Nevins at 23 Tulong Road, Saumarez Ponds at 2pm. There will be a tour of the garden, then a BYO afternoon tea, with mug, hot water, tea and coffee supplied. Then AGM for 2022 office bearers. Bring your plants that you have propagated and swap with others to get a range of new plants to try

Friday 10th December – Planning Meeting

This will be held at the Armidale Tree Group at 2pm. This is the opportunity to plan activities for 2022. All ideas welcome and the meeting is open to all. If you think we should do something different, then bring it up at the meeting.

