



Hobart Group Newsletter February 2024



Lunch in the herb field on the Needles in the South West, see page 3 for the report

(photo by Christine Corbett)

Welcome to New Members

Greetings from the APST Hobart Group to new member James Black from TasTAFE Warrane. We hope you can join us at our meetings, propagation sessions, walks and/or excursions. Please you make yourself known at our Plants Sale, Meetings or a propagation session, where, if you haven't already done so, you can select a plant for your garden or balcony/porch. Thank you for joining our Society.

Event Calendar

Carmen Walker, Prue Wright and the Program team

NOTE: FOR EXCURSIONS AND GARDEN VISITS, IF RAIN HAS BEEN OCCURRING UP TO 1 HOUR BEFORE THE EVENT IS DUE TO START, IT WILL BE CANCELLED.

If in doubt, phone or email the Contact person (details of contact persons on page 2).

2 March, Saturday, 1.30 to 5.00pm, Propagation, Kingston Primary School Nursery, setting more cuttings of floriferous plants for the October Plants Sale, potting up of size seedlings, potting on small plants, weeding as required; contact: Bruce Champion.

3 March, Sunday, Walk: The loop around Thark Ridge on the Wellington Plateau wanders for 7.5 km through a diversity of alpine vegetation types, all above 1000 m. The summit of Thark Ridge itself is only slightly lower than the Wellington summit so there is a bit of climbing involved but the gradients are mostly moderate (total ascent about 300 m, the biggest uphill is along a vehicle track). Some other sections are rather rocky underfoot. Vegetation details? Too long since we were last there so don't remember exactly but it's sure to be interesting. Meet at the carpark 500 m past Big Bend at 10:00 am. Please let Peter Tuft know if you are coming, peter@tuft.id.au, 0414 297 487.

6 March, Wednesday, 2.00pm, Kingborough Day Meeting, to Sue & John Brown 2/14 Burwood Rd Huonville. 2pm.; contact: Carmen Walker.

13 March, Wednesday, 7.00pm, Hobart Group, Annual General & General Meetings, Election of new President, Secretary, Treasurer and Committee members, followed by general meeting with guest speakers Membership officer, Margaret Killen and State President Louise Skabo speaking on "The mystery of APST revealed.. Committee meeting at 6.30pm all welcome; contact: Prue Wright.

23 March, Saturday, 2.00pm, Garden Visit, Christine Howell's garden, 31 Kunama Drive Kingston Beach.

23 March, Saturday, 11.00am, APST Inc. AGM hosted by Hobart Group, Kingston Primary School Library, all welcome, lunch provided.

3 April, Wednesday, 2.00pm, Kingborough Day Meeting, Block B Kingston Library for general discussion on our gardens and our plants; contact: Carmen Walker.

6 April, Saturday, 1.30 to 5.00pm, Propagation, Kingston Primary School Nursery, setting up all “for sale” plants for the 13 April Plants Sale, checking all labelling, plant type tray labels, tables, ½ wine boxes, bags and other carrying devices, weeding all pots, street signs and banners; contact: Bruce Champion.

7 April, Sunday, 10.00am Walk, Mount Misery, Mt Misery rises above Ranelagh to about 700m but it's not a miserable place. The walk starts from Huon Bush Retreats and climbs through wet sclerophyll and rainforest to emerge on a plateau of subalpine heath so there is quite a diversity of vegetation to see. If the weather is clear there are also some views to the southwest from the edge of the plateau (but don't expect anything special from the summit of Mt Misery). We return the same way, total distance around 6km with 300 m of height gain. Some parts of the track may be very muddy. Because part of the walk is on private property Huon Bush Retreats request a small donation to help with track maintenance - bring some cash. To find the start search Google Maps for "Huon Bush Retreats picnic area", meet there at 10:00am. Please let Peter Tuft know if you are coming, peter@tuft.id.au, 0414 297 487.

10 April, Wednesday, 7.00pm, Hobart Group General Meetings, activity to be advised. Committee meeting at 6.30pm all welcome; contact: Prue Wright.

13 April, Saturday, 8.00am to 10.00am Setting up, 10.00 to 1.00pm, Plants Sale, Kingston Primary School Library forecourt, setting up tables, transferring all “for sale” plants, noting plant type tray labels, setting up flower photos, transferring all ½ wine boxes, bags and other carrying devices, setting up pot size panels and purchase chits, books and give away brochures etc, street signs and banners, all hands on deck for this sale please; contact: Bruce Champion.

20 April, Saturday, Excursion or Garden visit; activity to be advised, Contact: Christine Corbett

Contacts:

Carmen Walker: 0421 449 446 or cwalker4761@gmail.com

Jenny Boyer: 0434 970 576 or jennyaboyer@gmail.com

Bruce Champion: 0408 146 041 or brchamp@ozemail.com.au

Prue Wright: 0438 410 192 or apsthobartsec@gmail.com

Christine Corbett: 0447 299 334 or corbettchristinem@gmail.com

Locations:

Kingborough Day Meeting, B Block Kingston Library, entry via Church Street for parking.

Kingston Primary School Library is accessed via the school's carpark off Church Street. Park in the top (staff) carpark. Walk in through the wide main path up the steps to the sandwich board pointing through playground then through the playground to the library passage access door on the right. Enter and walk to the automatic library doors on the left to join our meeting.

Kingston Primary School Nursery Our nursery is at the rear of the school. Access is off Sherburd Street via Freeman Street off Church Street. Park up the driveway between the end of the school and the basketball courts and walk along the back (top) of the school to the open gate in the tall colorbond fence.

The President's Bit

Jenny Boyer - President

Hi Hobart Members

Being inspired by the trip to the Needles and an inspiring talk by renowned landscaper Marcus Regus I'm looking forward to an interesting program for 2024.

With the AGM coming up in March, I again ask the question: Do you care about the APST Hobart Group? And, where we fit into the Tasmanian and Australian organisations.

Our Region President and Membership Officer will be speaking of the ins and outs of our Society at our AGM on March 13th.

We also need to fill positions at our AGM.

There are people considering nominations for most committee positions but we are in need of someone willing to be nominated for president and another for editor. The Group also needs to appoint two people to be on the state body.

This involves four meetings a year, two of which are by ZOOM.

All positions will be declared vacant before the election. I will not be standing for re-election as President, just completing some projects still outstanding.

The Program Committee is working well but needs someone to focus on garden visits and short excursions to ensure a diverse program to cater for the varied interests and abilities of our members. Please consider being more involved in the management of the Group.

Are you considering going to the ANPSA (Our National Association) biennial Conference in Victoria from September 30th to October 4th, hosted by APS Victoria?

These great events occur every 2 years and include talks, and excursions. This one is titled 'Gardens for Life'

Early Bird Registration is open until June 30th. Pre and post tour registrations close on 31st July.

Do go to the website www.anpsa2024conference.com for more information.

Kingborough Day Meeting

Carmen Walker

At the 7 February meeting 6 members were present for a general discussion. Pam brought flowers for the display table: *Anigozanthos flavidus* - 4 colours, *Grevilleas*, *Chrysocephalum* - 2, *Calocephalus*, *Westringia*, *Ceratopetalum*, *Xerochrysum bracteantha*, *Pelargonium australe*, *Thomasia purpurea*, *Leptospermum*, *Astartea heteranthera* and 2 *Melaleucas*.

Forward programme:

1 May meet at B block; Phil Sumner will do a presentation on a recent trip.

5 June Ruth Mollison will do a talk on seeding; B block room 2pm.

3 July Jenny from Nature Connection Network will give a talk about the Network, 2pm B block.

7 August meet B block 2pm for a discussion on *Grevilleas* and other winter plants.

4 September activity to be advised

2 October Garden visit to Peter & Robyn Tufts Garden, Kettering.

6 November activity to be advised

4 December 12noon for a BBQ and shared lunch.

Any queries contact Carmen Walker

Propagation

Nursery Coordinator

The propagation session on 3 January 2024 was attended by keen propagators who set cuttings, potted up seedlings and potted on plants. Bins of soil were mixed and emptied and bins of weed were extracted by super weeder.. Thank you all!

The next propagation session will be on Saturday 2 March. We'll pot up several punnets of seedlings, check for well rooted cuttings and pot them up and pot on a few small pots. Soil will need to be mixed and all plants need to be weeded please! So, come and join us working with plants at our Kingston Primary School Nursery.

Needles walk 4 February

Phil Sumner

According to the TasTrails website, "the short 3 km, 2 hour walk offers uninterrupted panoramic views from the rugged mountainous terrain with minimal physical exertion required." !!

After driving in intermittent rain from Hobart surrounds 6 doughty APSERS met at the start of the walk 16.5kms past Maydena, at the highest point on the Gordon River Road, elevation over 600 m with the subsequent steep 400 m plus walk ending at the summit, roughly 1,020 m above sea level. The weather forecast for the day was up to 25mm of rain with winds from the SE & SSE 25 to 35 km/h.

Our intrepid group donned gaiters, rain coats, pack covers and beanies and headed up the track in the light falling rain. After scrub-bashing through the now thick and dense regrowth lower vegetation mix of



Lomatia polymorpha flowers



Agastachys odorata flowers



Leptospermum nitidum flowers

Melaleuca squarrosa – Scented paperbark, *Banksia marginata* – Silver banksia, *Gahnia grandis* - Cutting grass, *Lomatia polymorpha* - Mountain guitarplant etc, we clambered up the slippery, very wet underfoot slope of rock, mud and peat for about 20 minutes. We then shed the outer layers of wet weather clothing as the light rain cleared and the wind became constant and at times actually helped push us up the slope.

First morning tea couldn't come quickly enough, as we hunkered down in the lee of sheltering rock

formations and the cloud cover gradually dissipated, allowing us to admire the improving panoramic views in most directions. We were fortunate enough to have two Corbetts with us for plant ID and Christine soon pointed out a tiny endemic green flowering lily *Campynema lineare* - Green

mountainlily, a Tasmanian endemic restricted to the central and western highlands. Once seen and recognised they became quite common all around us. Other flowering gems included *Agastachys odorata* - Fragrant candle bush, *Blandfordia punicea*

- Christmas bells, *Gentianella diemensis* - Tasmanian snowgentian, *Drosera arcturi* - Alpine sundew, *Leptospermum nitidum* - Shining

teatree, *Hibbertia procumbens* – Spreading guineaflower, *Epacris corymbiflora* - Buttongrass heath, *Billardiera longiflora* - Purple appleberry, *Bauera rubioides* - Wiry



Blandfordia punicea flowers



Hibbertia procumbens flowers

Epacris corymbiflora - Buttongrass heath, *Billardiera longiflora* - Purple appleberry, *Bauera rubioides* - Wiry

bauera and many others.

After a restful lunch below the peak, two mountain goats ascended the Needles peak whilst others continued wildflower spotting, resting weary limbs and admiring the now 360 degree views as the sky had cleared further and the sun appeared to enhance the pleasure of being in this lovely location.

Upon the return of our mountain goats, we girded our loins and began the steep and somewhat treacherous descent. Bottoms can come in very handy when descending steep terrain and this time proved no exception. Walking sticks also come into their own when on steep descents. As the group slowly negotiated the slippery waterlogged track, the temperature increase became quite noticeable as the wind had by now dissipated and with the sun ever present, some were shedding yet more clothing.

The scrub bashing recommenced at the bottom of the track until we made the road and crossed over to the car park, a quick change of socks, boots/shoes, wet weather gear stowed and a leisurely drive back to cloud-covered suburbia.

Photos by Christine Corbett

Flowering Plants in My Garden: Yet Another Eucalypt

Sue Newman

Eucalyptus lansdowneana is a mallee, endemic to a restricted area in the Gawler Range of South Australia. It naturally occurs in rocky outcrops but is looking quite happy in my garden of sandy loam and I was



Eucalyptus lansdowneana buds and pink flowers



Eucalyptus lansdowneana tree with pink flowers



Eucalyptus lansdowneana shooting from the lignotuber

relieved when it survived the “Big Wet” in 2022. I have since acquired another plant which was looking rather tired so, as it has a lignotuber, I cut it right back and it is re-sprouting very well.

The flowers are a lovely shade of pink though it is described on some websites as red. They are absolutely full of bees.

More about *Scaevola aemula*



White *Scaevola aemula*

tough plant. I couldn’t resist taking a photo of this pink *Scaevola* growing in a pot, belonging to a friend.

This white *Scaevola aemula* in my garden has spread to 1.4 metres. I had no idea they could be that size. I’ve mentioned it in a previous newsletter as it looked dead after all the rain in 2022 and when it began to recover I managed to dig it up while removing a weed. I replanted it and this is the result, one very



pink *Scaevola* in a pot

Photos by Sue Newman

(Excited) Christine’s flower of the month

I have something of a saga to tell.

Once upon a time, many years ago – maybe 35 – I had a *Blandfordia punicea* (Christmas bells) which I planted in the garden. It was fine for several years and then died. Some time later I had another one which I carefully kept in a pot where it was easier to keep watered. It grew (slowly) and I put it in a larger pot where it continued to grow new leaves but never looked like doing much else. I kept it with my other pots out the back and early every summer I would check to see if there was any promise... but no... oh well, maybe next year.

Also, once upon a time, quite a long time ago, I planted a *Nothofagus cunninghamii* in the front garden where it flourished, flowered, fruited, seeded (I even spotted a seedling the other day!) but then started getting dead bits (plus the falling leaved clogged the guttering!!) so I decided it had to go. My trimming revealed holes where grubs were enjoying themselves and finally my brother came and reduced the whole thing to a short stump and a pile of firewood.

So, how does one beautify a stump... put a pot on it?? Maybe I should try that *Blandfordia* in a slightly cooler spot... and maybe

Christine Howells

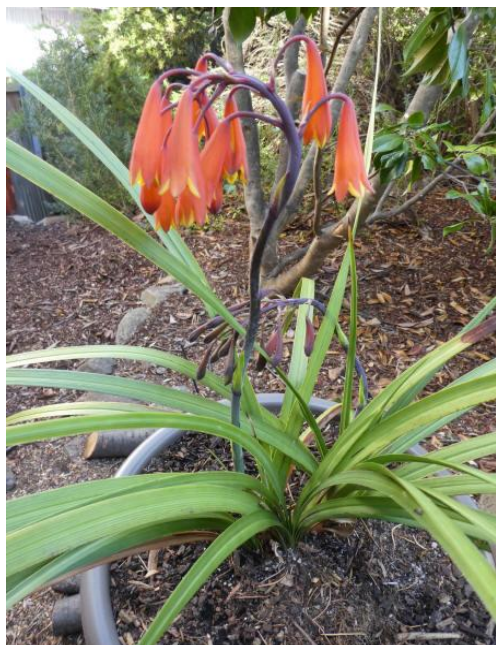


Blandfordia punicea repotted, flower forming



Blandfordia punicea with recurving flower

in a larger pot...Hardware store, bigger pot, potting mix...

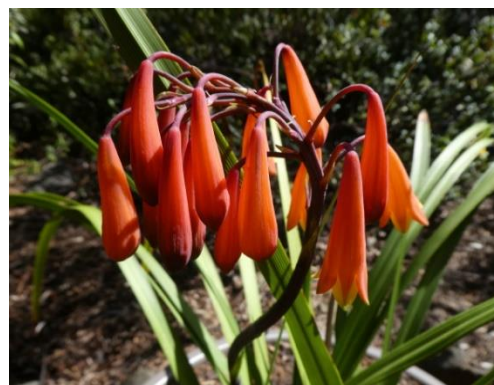


When I eventually extracted the plant I was rather shocked at the state of the roots. I know *Blandfordia* has deep roots, but here they had nowhere to go and they were solid and the treatment required was brutal. Eventually it was safely tucked into its new pot and placed on the stump on the shady side of the house but with afternoon sun, and seemed to be happy in its new location.



Blandfordia punicea with 2 flower stems
but with afternoon sun, and seemed to be

Blandfordia punicea with a flowering stem thought 'that's a weird looking leaf' so stepped off the path for a closer look to discover an emerging flower spike! A few days later, when photographing progress, I discovered there was a second spike about to emerge!! So you now understand my excitement, especially as I thought the *Blandfordia* season in the bush was well over by now and I actually hadn't expected such an immediate or positive response to what I had put that plant through.



Second recurring flowering stem

Photos by Christine Howells

My only remaining question is 'What are those two spikes, which are shaped like question marks, asking me?' Maybe 'Why didn't you do it sooner?'

Heather's flower for the month Heather Webster

Tea tree - *Leptospermum scoparium* - "Burgundy Queen".

This is one of the first plants I grew in my garden and it is one of my favourites.

It was planted two years ago and has grown to a height of 2 metres providing a great screen from the neighbouring property.

I have a smaller specimen growing in the front garden which flowers profusely in the spring and is teeming with bees attracted by the strong scent and colour. Little wrens come to drink from a basin of water located beneath the branches, which is an added delight.

The flowers are over their best now, but I look forward to next year when it will have grown taller and will be a great feature in the garden.

Leptospermum scoparium - "Burgundy Queen" ->

Photo by Heather Webster



MORE FROM THE MARGATE HILLS Maria Honey

It's surprising how peaceful it is since the latest batch of bird babies left their parental homes here in the hills. The poor little kookaburras' singing lessons were painful for us and probably for them. They practised diligently but just couldn't reproduce the ringing calls of their parents. Instead they sounded like small, but

very loud bits of rusty machinery, especially when they aimed for the high notes. The parents usually ended the lessons impatiently with a virtuosic demonstration of scales, trills and crescendos as if to say, ‘listen kid, this is how it’s meant to sound’.

The young falcon turned up in the big *Eucalyptus pulchella*, and watched by its two proud parents, bravely started flying in ever widening circles around the hills and valleys screeching the whole time, sounding terrified by what it had to do. At least one parent was always there to keep an eye on it, and in just over a week it had found confidence and was gone.

Reg the raven had two obnoxious young who begged non-stop to be fed, fluffing up their feathers and doing their best to look cute. Their harsh, grating demands for regurgitated food became part of our early mornings for weeks. Reg was a good parent and when they finally left they were as big, healthy and as glossy as he is.



In contrast the pademelons and their babies are mostly seen but not heard. The tiny joeys peeped out of their mums’ warm pouches, watching with bright little eyes what the adults did. Then, ominously for their mothers, they started putting what they’d seen into practice.

Jack jumpers probably don’t understand the concept of peace. These two seemed to be fighting over something they’d found in the bowl of water put out for the birds. For more than five minutes I watched them wrestle each other in and out of the water. They must have been exhausted, but when I left, the ferocious struggle was still going on.

Photos by Maria Honey

Bin laden possum

Sue Newman



Possum worn out in the bin

A surprise for me in our wheelie bin one morning. Luckily it was empty. I’d left the lid up leaning against the wall and it must have closed with all the activity going on inside by the possum. I guess it usually finds tasty morsels in bins. It was the red bin. It didn’t panic, just lay there looking at us, a rather pathetic sight really. When we let it out it, obviously it knew its way around, ran straight to our big wattle tree, then ran along the top of the fence and into a neighbour’s tree. It looked in great condition.

Photo by Sue Newman

Report of the General Meeting Australian Plants Society Tas., Hobart Group

Kingston Primary School, Wednesday 14 February, 2024

29 Members and friends were welcomed by Jenny Boyer, President.

The guest speaker, Marcus Ragus was introduced by Jenny Boyer and thanked by Christine Corbett for his topic 'Rocks in the Garden'. A horticulturist formerly working in the Tasmania Botanical Gardens Marcus now runs his own state-wide landscape design business, with his son and daughter, working with free stone, masonry, and excavators.

Several years ago Marcus worked at the Spring Bay Mill, Triabunna, where the theme was to rehabilitate the 32ha site but retain its history.

Marcus has moved away from horticulture to landscape design, working on fusion gardens, including Hollow Tree in the Central Highlands. Marcus has also worked on coastal sites, i.e., in Swansea and Dolphin Sands. Marcus takes inspiration from the placement of rocks in nature, including crevice landscape designs which are used in Europe. Marcus uses *Austrostipa* and other *Poas* as contrast plants. Japanese and Chinese gardens have distinct processes and take decades to produce. Marcus learnt a lot from working in a bonsai nursery in the 1970's. Many books are available on technical placement and design. Marcus recommends understanding the life-span growth of plants.

Marcus shared photos matching his topic headings of balanced placement, texture and form, including photos of 'Aeolian dunes' he created at the Spring Bay Mill site. These dunes are formed in nature when the top of a dune drops out to form a semi-circular shape with its 'back' to the wind.

Marcus created a dry creek bed garden in Swansea and recommends a blended mix of pine bark and uses polycarbonate tubes to protect bigger plants from animals.

Large, squared, sandstone blocks have become popular in landscaping in Tasmania. Marcus only sources his rocks from proven quarries, strongly recommending only using ethically sourced rocks. Marcus recommends being creative.

At question time Marcus explained that a lot of woodchips left at the Spring Bay Mill site were composted. The whole site had been scraped and placed into windrows on a neighbouring property before rehabilitation began.

A book featuring Spring Bay Mill will be released in March.

For flower of the Month Peter Tuft shared photos and a cutting of *Eucalyptus vernicosa* growing at altitude in the bush,

For Where I've Been, What I've Seen, Christine Corbett shared photos of a recent APS walk to the Needles, on Gordon River Road. Good regrowth was noticed following the Gell River fires. The extent of the fire was obvious.

Facebook was discussed: should we use APS Facebook site to advertise meetings etc.? The APS Facebook site is members only. We need to include on the site the insurance responsibilities etc. We need to 'spread the word'.

Finance: 280 copies of TNF were sold last year.

Flower from the table was *Rhododendron lochiaie*, found in Queensland, with vibrant orange/red flowers, growing in a pot, was brought in by Christine Howells.

Note from the Editor:

Bruce Champion

This is my last HGN as Editor. I find I have too many commitments and too little time to do them all justice. My website www.tasmanianflora.com gives me greatest pleasure and takes up most of my computer time. So, for the sake of my mental health, I will not be available to continue Editing the APST Hobart HGN. Sincere thanks to the few Members who sent me contributions early with excellent photos.

If you don't wish to continue receiving our HGN please advise the Editor by reply email.

E&OE