

# NEWSLETTER

MARCH-APRIL 2020

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Website: <https://apsvic.org.au/fjc-rogers-seminar-2020/>



Logo Image: *Prostanthera galbraithiae* Tamara Leitch

## Editorial

This is our second newsletter for the 13th FJC Rogers Seminar and what a different world it arrives in. Because of the ongoing ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government regulations on gatherings and social distancing and our particularly vulnerable demographic, the over 60 age group, we may have to cancel the seminar.

There has been much discussion within the FJC Rogers committee, APS Yarra Yarra and APS Vic where the executive recently issued the recommendation to postpone and for the committee to come up with alternative dates. However postponing the seminar may not be such a good option. The FJC Committee and Plant Growers would have to maintain our momentum for a further 6 months or so beyond the October dates, we then also run into conflict with other events on the APS calendar including ANPSA in NSW in 2021 and demands on people's limited finances given the situation the economy is facing.

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Registration will NOT go ahead at this time. For now we breathe and await some feedback from the APS YY membership. We wait a few months more before we make a final decision on May 31.

Our plans for the seminar are well developed at this time, thank you to the committee and plant growers for their superlative effort. Thank you also to the speakers who put in the time and effort to send us their information for this issue. As you will see they are a most interesting & talented bunch. Both Professor Jeremy Bruhl and Ian Telford intend to come from the University of New England Herbarium, Armidale. Thank you also to the Garden Owners who continue to put such time and effort into preparing their gardens. This is such a good time for planting and there are so many mint bushes to choose from – amongst others of course.

Gardening is the best antidote I know for high anxiety and lowness of mood. It literally grounds us and revitalises the spirit in a way nothing else can.



Bee on *Prostanthera* 'Poorinda Ballerina' a particularly floriferous, hardy hybrid of *P.phylicifolia* X *P. lasianthos*. Image Ben Eaton

## Proposed Program

9.00 am	Cathy Powers, MC Welcome to Country Elizabeth Doig <i>Memories of Fred my primary school teacher</i>
9.15 am	Keynote Speaker: Dr Trevor Wilson - <i>Intimate relationships unveiled! What we have learned from kinships of quirky Australian mints.</i>
10.15 am	Morning Tea
10.45 am	Professor Jeremy Bruhl & Dr Ian Telford- <i>Systematic study of Prostanthera is resolving mayhem in the mint bushes, with important consequences for conservation and cultivation.</i>
11.45 am	Maria Hitchcock, OAM <i>Prostanthera and Westringia Genera - propagation, cultivation &amp; essential oils</i>
12.45 pm	Lunch
1.45 pm	FJC Rogers 2022 presentation and other announcements.
2.00 pm	Amanda Shade <i>Propagation and Cultivation of Allied Genera. The Kings Park experience</i>
3 pm	Afternoon Tea & Plant Sales
3.30 pm	Optional. Visit Lyla Brown's Garden, Research
6.00 pm	Pre-dinner drinks, BYO other than water, tea and coffee
6.30 pm	Dinner
8 pm	After Dinner Speaker – Dr. Michael Whitehead <i>Pollinators, pollination, and gene flow in Victorian Prostanthera</i>

**Sunday 25 October, 2020 Coach Tour to Gardens :-the Barfield Garden in Research, Giufre in Hurstbridge, Lunch at Maranoa Public Garden, Balwyn and Kate Herd garden in Alphington.**

## Plants and Plant Sales

As there is some uncertainty as to whether or not we will hold the seminar & the current batch of plants are leaping out of the pots we feel it would be a shame and waste of effort if we did not attempt to get them out there to you for planting.

We have many full grown plants for sale at very reasonable prices and this is the best season for getting them in the ground. You will find many FJC Rogers species up for sale online soon as APS YY has cancelled our usual Autumn



Sale and we are instead selling online from April 18 to 30. Check out our website for when the details go up [apsyarrayarra.org.au](http://apsyarrayarra.org.au). Jill Lulham has created an interactive excel form online with a PayPal online payment system. We are also considering postage to other destinations. More about that will be on the website.

Perhaps the various country & interstate DGs could organise a representative to click and collect!  
*Prostanthera behriana, Miriam Ford*

## Hanging Baskets

**The MIFGS Hanging Basket:** MIFGS has been cancelled and the Hanging Basket competition has gone digital. We are to send in two photos by March 29 and will be judged accordingly. The images will be up on the website. The basket described in the previous news is looking great and coming into flower. The species chosen were described in the February News. There are also a variety of Hanging Baskets for sale specifically designed for the FJC. The detailed descriptions and prices will all be up online.



Eltham Village Centre Management  
The Yarra Store [theyarrastore.com.au](http://theyarrastore.com.au)  
Shaws Road Vineyard and Winery [shawsroad.com.au](http://shawsroad.com.au)  
Mary Lou Pittard, Australian Artist [www.pittards.com.au](http://www.pittards.com.au)  
Bulleen Art & Garden [www.baag.com.au/](http://www.baag.com.au/)

## OUR SPEAKERS:

### *Maria Hitchcock, OAM*

**M**aria is a retired High School teacher who holds a Bachelor of Arts (UNE) majoring in Botany and a Masters in Professional Studies (Aboriginal Studies) Hons. as well as a NSW Teachers Certificate and the ZMP Zertifikat in German (Göttingen). She is a Life Member of the Australian Plants Society, former leader of the ANPSA Correa Study Group and Waratah & Flannel Flower Study Group and holds the National Correa Collection in her private botanic garden which is registered with BGANZ. She published *Correas* in 2010. She is a regular ABC New England North West Radio Garden presenter.

Maria has been very active in her local community over many years helping to prevent Eucalyptus Dieback, teaching TAFE courses on identification and propagation of Australian Plants, designing the western section of the Bicentennial Arboretum and advising educators as a member of the North West Environmental Education Committee. She is a founding member of the local APS group and holds membership of many other local organisations and advisory committees. Known nationally as the Wattle Lady, Maria led the campaign for gazetting

our National Floral Emblem (*Acacia pycnantha*) and National Wattle Day. Her book, *A Celebration of Wattle* (2012 Rosenberg) outlines the history of the Wattle Day movement.

Maria received an Order of Australia medal for services to conservation and the environment in 2018. She currently leads *Save our Flora*, an independent online project which encourages members to grow and preserve our listed threatened flora. Maria also runs an online native plants nursery (*Cool Natives Nursery*) specialising in frost and drought hardy native plants, Waratahs, Flannel Flowers, Correas and Threatened flora. Over the years she has developed some extensive propagation skills as well as computer and internet marketing competence. She is an experienced speaker, giving presentations to APS Conferences as well as a wide range of organisations including the Botanic Gardens Congress in Wellington NZ in October 2019. Maria is currently involved in a project with the international company *Down Under Enterprises* to produce a new anti-bacterial oil derived from one of her *Prostanthera* varieties.



### *Dr Michael Whitehead*

**M**ichael Whitehead is a plant ecologist and evolutionary biologist. His primary research interests focus on the interaction of plants with animals and fungi. In particular, his work has focused on the way plants and their flowers evolve under the influence of pollinating animals.



Michael has conducted research on mimicry and pollination in Australian orchids, flower colour in South African mountain meadows, cryptic orchid-fungal relationships in Western Australia,

translocation of endangered flora, and mating patterns across the global diversity of flowering plants.

His most recent research fellowship was hosted at University of Melbourne where he investigated the differences in bird and insect pollination in some of our most beloved native shrub genera.

He has recently shifted to the government sector as an analyst on invasive species problems.

## Professor Jeremy Bruhl

Jeremy Bruhl was born in country New South Wales, developed an interest in plants helping his brother grow vegetables in the backyard, which led to study at Burnley Horticultural College in the 1970s. It was then that he was hooked on botany, 'the bush', photography and microscopy, as well as thoroughly enjoying horticulture.

After working for Australian Quarantine Service and while working as a Gardens Advisory Officer for NSW Agriculture, Jeremy started studying Botany with Zoology at the University of NSW. Honour studies at UNSW were on relationships of obscure daisies including *Cotula*. PhD studies at the Australian National University took in the genera of Cyperaceae, worldwide, which led to work on the Flora of North America project at Missouri Botanical Garden.



A grant from the Australian Biological Research Study program to study Phyllanthaceae, brought him back to Canberra, and then in 1992, an appointment as lecturer at the University of New England took him to Armidale in northern NSW. Jeremy is Professor of plant systematics in Botany and Director of the N.C.W. Beadle Herbarium at UNE.

Jeremy's research and research supervision has continued in daisies, sedges (particularly with Russell Barrett, Karen Wilson, and worldwide collaborators), and phyllanth, and ranged across diverse groups including eucalypts, grasses, pepper bushes, restiads, wattles.

Most current projects, including paper-daisies, *Melichrus*, *Phebalium* and *Prostanthera* involve wonderful co-supervision with UNE's Dr Rose Andrew and Dr Ian Telford. These studies aim to figure out what the species are, estimate their evolutionary relationships, produce new classifications and tools for identification, and understand the conservation status of the species.



## Dr Ian Telford

Ian Telford is Honorary Curator of the N.C.W. Beadle Herbarium, School of Environmental and Rural Studies, University of New England, Armidale. After 34 years employed at the Australian National Botanic Gardens, Canberra, as collector/botanist, in retirement still presses plants and dabbles in taxonomic botany. Following completion of an MSc in 2009 on the genus *Cucumis* (naming five new Australian species related to Cucumber and Rockmelon) and a PhD researching the family Phyllanthaceae in 2014, now concentrates on revisionary studies in *Phebalium* and *Prostanthera*, and supervising higher degree students.

**Accommodation & Travel:** please do not book at this time and cancel your reservation if you have one.

## Curiosity Spot: Feral Goats and the Brundah Mints

Noel Cartwright of the Weddin Community Native Nursery, (Grenfell, Central NSW, near Forbes) sent me cutting material for two of the Brundah Mints – *Prostanthera ovalifolia* Brundah Candy (pink) and Brundah View (purple) - see images below, as well as *Prostanthera gilesii* a critically endangered mint from Mt Canobolos (central NSW). We have lots of lovely plants raised from this material.

The Brundah Mints are beautifully described on p 45 of the Cradle of Incense by George W Althofer. While George devotes a whole page to the description of the area I give you an excerpt : *such a never to be forgotten picture...a river of kaleidoscopic colour flowed between the giant rocks...here were mint bushes with near-white flowers, the palest pink, rose, then through all the gradations of blue & mauve to the glory of purple & violet.*

Noel told me how the Weddin Community Native Nursery volunteers set about funding and building a fence around the area to protect the mints which had been heavily predated by feral goats.

When I first spoke to Noel about getting the plants, he said they were almost finished and then...on May 13, 2019 I got this message from Noel. *Our mint bush fence is now complete! And plants are looking good! I've included two photos of the fence the day it was completed! I'm the one with no hat. The other one is Dennis a good friend and member of the Weddin Community Native Nursery. Dennis built the fence.*

Congratulations and thank you Noel & others for protection, preservation and cultivation of our beautiful flora. Maintaining such a gift for all of us & for posterity.

