

Castlemaine Naturalist

October 2024

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Monthly newsletter of the
Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.



Grampians Spider Orchid
Caladenia grampiana
Photo: Yvonne Hsu

CFNC Spring Camp, Grampians, 13-15 September 2024

By Lou Citroën and Jenny Rolland

A little while back, Geoff and Geraldine Harris mooted the idea of a CFNC Spring camp near their Grampians property as a large-scale wildflower wander and asked for any interest from club members. So overwhelming was the response that the Spring weekend 13 to 15 September was decided, the nearby accommodation at Old Dadswell Town was soon to be booked out and Geoff and Geraldine set about planning a fabulous program for us.

Described on their website as “A unique old-style Australian ‘town’ nestled on 280 acres of natural bush on the edge of the Grampians National Park”, *Old Dadswell Town* is in effect a motel complex with a delightful difference; providing a variety of eclectic, yet comfortable and well-appointed and self-contained accommodation; each ‘cabin’ indisputably *unique*.



The ‘Truck ‘n’ Motel’



The ‘General Store’

Photos: Lou Citroën

By Friday afternoon, all of the group had arrived; 20 altogether (with Yvonne to join us early the next day).

President, Euan Moore welcomed all, provided a quick rundown of upcoming CFNC events, and then introduced Neil Marriott, our guest speaker for the evening.

We were very fortunate to have Neil as speaker, an expert on Australian native wildflowers and the Grampians. His talk “Grampians Endemics”, illustrated with his beautiful photos, was an excellent introduction to our weekend. Neil first explained the geology of the Grampians and then the various vegetation types and habitats of the Grampians, ranging from heathlands through forests to subalpine woodlands. He described special plants for each of these different habitats and finally addressed the challenges of avoiding their extinction due to climate change and inappropriate fire regimes.



Euan (left) thanking Neil Marriott
 Photo: Lou Citroën

Euan presented Neil with a gift from the Club as a token of our appreciation.



Heatherlie Quarry walk
 Photo: Lou Citroën

For the next day, Saturday, two wonderful excursions were planned: Heatherlie Quarry and, after a lunch break, Beehive Falls.

Travelling in convoy and carpooling as much as possible, we set off in convoy at around 9:30 am to arrive at Heatherlie Quarry at around 10 am. Prior to any walk into native vegetation, CFNC ensures that all participants decontaminate the soles of our shoes with Phytoclean as a precaution against inadvertent introduction of the fungal pathogen, *Phytophthora*. This excursion was no exception.

The group followed the path at a leisurely pace, meandering for two hours or so through this beautiful location, allowing ourselves to take in, enjoy and photograph some of the Grampians’ beauty on display, often guided by those with plant expertise amongst the

group for identification help. We moved on to an attractive bush setting for lunch at Plantation Camp Ground on Mount Zero Road. It was an opportunity to gather and chat over lunch about our morning’s walk.

In the afternoon, we enjoyed a steady climb to the Beehive Falls. A great diversity of both flora and fungi was found. We were very fortunate that orchid expert and member Russell Stanley was able to join us for this excursion, adding significantly to our orchid count. He identified a total of 21 orchid species on the day, 15 of which were in flower (see table compiled by Russell and Cathrine). The highlight was the rare Grampians Spider Orchid (*Caladenia grampiana*) that he spotted at the Quarry (feature photo on title page).



Epacris impressa came in many shades of pink
 Photo: Jenny Rolland

To conclude the Saturday evening, Geraldine was our guest speaker. She had us spell-bound as she spoke to her wonderful slide presentation, prepared by both Geoff and Geraldine, about their long association with the Grampians. She explained how they fell in love at first sight with and bought their property in favour of a sea-side location. They called it *Kiah* (an indigenous word meaning 'a beautiful place'). The property included a beautiful 'pole house' placed in the middle of the native flora and fauna so enjoyed by them and their young family at the time. This place was their little piece of paradise (they had even befriended a number of local creatures including a kangaroo they had named Daisy).



Geraldine & Geoff Harris
 Photo: Lou Citroën



Recovery after the fires
 Photo: Jenny Rolland

On a poignant note, Geraldine described the ravages of the bush fires that 10 years ago destroyed so much of the Grampians bushland and fauna. Sadly, their property and home also succumbed to the devastation. More environmental destruction was to follow with Grampians fires early this year. At the conclusion of her presentation, Euan thanked Geraldine for her touching presentation and extended a heart-felt thanks to both her and Geoff for all their planning and hard work in making this Spring Camp such a success.

On Sunday we started with a 4WD tour of Geoff and Geraldine's property to see first-hand the impacts of the devastating bushfire that had burnt through the whole property in February. Although the scene was sobering, we were heartened by signs of the beautiful bushland returning – there were epicormic shoots on many trees, new growth and many flowers on the forests of grass trees, and carpets of leaves of several orchid species. There were many cheery purple "Glossies" in flower and very excitingly, several Red Beak orchids just in flower were spotted near the house site. The Red Beaks only flower after fire as their scientific name (*Pyrorchis nigricans*) implies. There were also many birds calling which was somewhat surprising considering the state of the vegetation, but wonderful to hear. A special treat was to see two Gang Gang Cockatoos fly into nearby trees.

We then moved on to our first excursion at Hollow Mountain. As we gently walked up the path to the flat rocks and rock art site, we again marvelled at the amazing diversity of wildflowers. More orchids were spotted including another rare species in a shallow depression of the flat rocks – Flat Rustyhood (*Pterostylis planulata*). Magnificent displays of the densely purple-flowered Rough Mint Bush (*Prostanthera rotundifolia*) were seen, especially on the upper slopes. Closer examination of the moss beds on the flat rock area revealed another scale of plants no more than 3cm

high – Pygmy Purslane (*Calandrinia granulifera*), tiny trigger plants (*Levenhookia dubia*), and daisies including Small Wrinklewort (*Siloxerus multiflorus*), Common Bow-flower (*Millotia muelleri*), Soft Millotia (*Millotia tenuifolia*) and Rayless Daisy (*Brachyscome perpusilla*).



Prostanthera rotundifolia on the sandstone slopes. Photo: Jenny Rolland

The final excursion after lunch was a walk up the track towards Mt Zero. Our first gasp was for an extensive low area covered in subtly pink coloured Heath-myrtle (*Micromyrtus ciliata*). Again we wandered slowly up the hill through patches of Oyster Bay Pine (*Callitris rhomboidea*), Snow Myrtle (*Calytrix alpestris*), and different heath species shading little gems of orchids and sundews. Yet more species of orchids were spotted in flower - Red-banded Greenhood (*Pterostylis sanguinea*) and Small Gnat Orchid (*Cyrtostylis reniformis*).

Geraldine kindly provided us with an enormous list of potential plants that we could see on the different walks, so we could mark off those that we saw. The impressive total plant list that we compiled for our weekend can be viewed at this link – <https://castlemaineinfieldnaturalists.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/CFNC-Grampians-Spring-Camp-Sept-2024-Plant-list.pdf>.

We thank Geoff and Geraldine for an extremely well organised and enjoyable weekend, showcasing the incredible diversity of wildflowers and spectacular rocky ranges of Gariwerd/Grampians. Thanks too, to our hosts at Old Dadswell Town - Jenny and Max, who provided very comfortable and delightfully different accommodation.



Austral Grass Tree, *Xanthorrhoea australis*. Photo: Yvonne Hsu



Shingle Back, *Tiliqua rugosa*. Photo: Yvonne Hsu



Euan and Geraldine doing close identifications. Photo: Jenny Rolland.

Grampians Spring Camp Orchid lists

Heatherlie Quarry & Beehive Falls, 14/09/2024 – Russell Stanley

<i>Acianthus pusillus</i>	Small Mosquito Orchid	leaf
<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	Pink Fingers	flowers & buds
<i>Caladenia grampiana</i>	Grampians Spider Orchid	flower
<i>Caladenia (Glossodia) major</i>	Wax-Lip Orchid	flowers & buds
<i>Caladenia tentaculata</i> &/or <i>parva</i>	Eastern Mantis Orchid &/or Small Spider Orchid	leaf & buds
<i>Corybas incurvus</i>	Slaty Helmet Orchid	leaf & finished flowers
<i>Cyrtostylis reniformis</i>	Small Gnat Orchid	leaf & flowers
<i>Diuris leopardina</i> or <i>sulphurea</i>	Yellow Leopard Orchid or Hornet/Tiger Orchid	leaf & buds
<i>Leporella fimbriata</i>	Fringed Hare Orchid	leaf
<i>Pterostylis alpina</i>	Mountain Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pterostylis concinna</i>	Trim Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pterostylis diminuta</i>	Dainty Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pterostylis macilenta</i>	Grampians Greenhood	buds
<i>Pterostylis melagramma</i>	Black Striped Greenhood	finished flowers
<i>Pterostylis nana</i>	Dwarf Greenhood/Snail Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>	Nodding Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i>	Red Beaks	leaf
<i>Thelymitra</i> sps.	Various Sun Orchids	leaf & buds

Hollow Mountain and Mt Zero, 15/09/2024 - Cathrine Harboe-Ree

<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	Pink Fingers	flowers & buds
<i>Caladenia (Glossodia) major</i>	Wax-Lip Orchid	flowers & buds
<i>Caladenia tentaculata</i> &/or <i>parva</i>	Eastern Mantis Orchid &/or Small Spider Orchid	leaf & buds
<i>Cyrtostylis reniformis</i>	Small Gnat Orchid	leaf & flowers
<i>Leporella fimbriata</i>	Fringed Hare Orchid	leaf
<i>Pterostylis concinna</i>	Trim Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pterostylis nana</i>	Dwarf Greenhood/Snail Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>	Nodding Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pterostylis planulata</i>	Flat Rustyhood	flowers & buds
<i>Pterostylis sanguinea</i>	Red-banded Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i>	Red Beaks	leaf
<i>Thelymitra</i> sps.	Various Sun Orchids	leaf & buds

Orchids Observed at Geraldine and Geoff's property, 15/09/2024 - Cathrine Harboe-Ree

<i>Caladenia carnea</i>	Pink Fingers	flowers & buds
<i>Caladenia (Glossodia) major</i>	Wax-Lip Orchid	flowers & buds
<i>Diuris leopardina</i>	Yellow Leopard Orchid	flowers
<i>Leporella fimbriata</i>	Fringed Hare Orchid	leaf
<i>Pterostylis nana</i>	Dwarf Greenhood/Snail Greenhood	flowers
<i>Pyrorchis nigricans</i>	Red Beaks	leaf, flowers & buds

Wednesday Wildflower Wanders

Wednesday 4th September 2024 in Kalimna

Ten wildflower enthusiasts, members and very welcome visitors, came on our annual East-West loop walk in Kalimna Park. Fewer plants were in flower than on the 2022 and 2023 Wanders, as shown in the list below. In 2022 the walk was held mid-September, with the longest list. But it was a pleasant afternoon, with outstanding displays of Fairy Wax-flower *Philothea verrucosa* and Purple Coral-pea *Hardenbergia violacea*. After returning to the cars, we drove north just over the hill to view a fine group of Nodding Greenhood *Pterostylis nutans*, growing at the side of the road.

It is worth reading the reports for previous years in the October 2022 and 2023 newsletter, noting the differences in some species on the eastern and western slopes, which was not so marked this year. My thanks to Euan for his 2022 list.

Peter Turner

Plants-in-flower List for Kalimna, Sep 2022-2023-2024

Common Name	Scientific Name	Observed on		
		14/9/2022	6/9/2023	4/9/2024
Climbing Sundew	<i>Drosera macrantha subsp. planchonii</i>	✓		
Dwarf Greenhood	<i>Pterostylis nana</i>	✓		
Hooded Caladenia	<i>Caladenia cucullata</i>	✓		
Tall Greenhood	<i>Pterostylis melagramma</i>	✓		
Wax-lip Orchid	<i>Caladenia (Glossodia) major</i>	✓		
Yellow Star	<i>Pauridia vaginata var. vaginata</i>	✓		
Blue Caladenia	<i>Cyanicula caerulea</i>	✓	✓	
Common Wood-rush	<i>Luzula meridionalis</i>	✓	✓	
Early Black Wattle	<i>Acacia decurrens</i>	✓	✓	
Leopard Orchid	<i>Diuris pardina</i>	✓		buds
Many-flowered Matt-rush	<i>Lomandra multiflora</i>	✓	✓	
Tall Sundew	<i>Drosera auriculata</i>	✓	✓	
Yam Daisy	<i>Microseris walteri</i>	✓	✓	
Billy Buttons	<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>	✓	✓	✓
Creamy Candles	<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>	✓	✓	✓
Downy or Mountain Grevillea	<i>Grevillea alpina</i>	✓	✓	✓
Early Nancy	<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>	✓	✓	✓
Fairy Wax-flower	<i>Philothea verrucosa</i>	✓	✓	✓
Gold-dust Wattle	<i>Acacia acinacea</i>	✓	✓	✓
Golden Wattle	<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>	✓	✓	✓

Gorse Bitter-pea	<i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i> subsp. <i>ruscifolia</i>	✓	✓	✓
Hedge Wattle	<i>Acacia paradoxa</i>	✓	✓	✓
Narrow-leaf Bitter-pea	<i>Daviesia leptophylla</i>	✓	✓	✓
Nodding Greenhood	<i>Pterostylis nutans</i>	✓	✓	✓
Pink Bells	<i>Tetralochea ciliata</i>	✓	✓	✓
Pink Fingers	<i>Caladenia fuscata</i>	✓	✓	✓
Purple Coral-pea	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	✓	✓	✓
Rough Mint-bush	<i>Prostanthera denticulata</i>	✓	✓	✓
Rough Wattle	<i>Acacia aspera</i>	✓	✓	✓
Slender Rice-flower	<i>Pimelea linifolia</i>	✓	✓	✓
Spreading Wattle	<i>Acacia genistifolia</i>	✓	✓	✓
Sticky Everlasting	<i>Xerochrysum viscosum</i>	✓	✓	buds
White Marianth	<i>Rhytidisporum procumbens</i>	✓	✓	✓

Sinclair's Lane, 11th September. Leader: Phil Hopley

Unfortunately, this wildflower wander was cut short by rain, although not the dramatic hail-storm that Castlemaine township experienced that afternoon. Nevertheless, Sinclair's Lane put on a good show with a few orchid species in flower or bud. Although the rare *Grevillea micrantha* was not in flower for our visit, Phil Hopley advises that it was later in flower (21/9/24).

The following plant list was compiled by Noel Young and Euan Moore.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Gold-dust Wattle	<i>Acacia acinacea</i>
Golden Wattle	<i>Acacia pycnantha</i>
Chocolate or Vanilla Lily	<i>Arthropodium</i> sp. (buds)
Wax-lip	<i>Caladenia (Glossodia) major</i> (buds)
Pink Fingers	<i>Caladenia</i> sp.
Gorse Bitter-pea	<i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i> subsp. <i>ruscifolia</i>
Leopard Orchid	<i>Diuris pardina</i>
Guinea Flower	<i>Hibbertia</i> sp.
Yam Daisy	<i>Microseris walteri</i> (buds)
Grey Everlasting	<i>Ozothamnus obcordatus</i> (buds)
Fairy Wax-flower	<i>Philothea verrucosa</i>
Dwarf Greenhood	<i>Pterostylis nana</i>
White Marianth	<i>Rhytidisporum procumbens</i>
Pink Bells	<i>Tetralochea ciliata</i>
Early Nancy	<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>

The Monk, 18th September. Leader: Noel Young

Common Name	Scientific Name
Orchids	
Castlemaine Spider	<i>Caladenia clavescens (one)</i>
Leopard Orchid	<i>Diuris pardina</i>
Pink Fingers	<i>Caladenia carnea</i>
Wax-lip	<i>Caladenia (Glossodia) major (one)</i>
Others	
Beard Heath	<i>Leucopogon virgatus</i>
Billy Buttons	<i>Craspedia variabilis</i>
Creamy Candles	<i>Stackhousia monogyna</i>
Downy Grevillea	<i>Grevillea alpina</i>
Early Nancy	<i>Wurmbea dioica</i>
Gold-dust Wattle	<i>Acacia acinacea</i>
Gorse Bitter Pea	<i>Daviesia ulicifolia</i>
Grey Everlasting	<i>Ozothamnus obcordatus (buds)</i>
Hill Flat Pea	<i>Platylobium montanum</i>
Pink Bells	<i>Tetralochea ciliata</i>
Purple Coral Pea	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>
Slender Rice-flower	<i>Pimelea linifolia</i>
Sticky Everlasting	<i>Xerochrysum viscosum (buds)</i>
Tall Sundew	<i>Drosera peltata</i>
Urn Heath	<i>Melichrus urceolatus</i>
White Marianth	<i>Rhytidosporum procumbens</i>



Castlemaine Spider Orchid
Caladenia clavescens
Photo: Cathrine Harboe-Ree



Urn Heath
Melichrus urceolatus
Photo: Noel Young



Early Nancy
Wurmbea dioica
Photo: Noel Young

Observations



Orb Weaver Spider, *Genus Socca sp.*
Nocturnal. Shepherds Flat
Photo: Jill Williams



Orb Weaver Spider.
Nocturnal. Shepherds Flat
Photo: Jill Williams



Australian Magpie Moth,
Nyctemera amicus. Shepherds Flat
Photo: Jill Williams



Plume Moth. Genus *Stangeia*.
Recognizable by their T-shaped silhouette.
At rest, the moths hold their wings tightly
rolled. Shepherds Flat. Photo: Jill Williams



Purple Coral-pea, *Hardenbergia violacea* mixed with *Acacia sp.*
Photo: Peter Turner



Amphiclasta lygaea. A moth belonging to the family Geometridae (inchworms). The larvae appear to 'measure the earth' as they move along in a looping fashion. Douglas, Western Vic. Photo: Euan Moore.



After building the new bird hide on their bush block, Euan and Jenny were rewarded with a visit from a female Gang Gang, Grey Fantail and Golden (Western) Whistler.

Parks Victoria's new podcast – "Closer to Nature"

Climate change is transforming our landscapes in ways we never imagined. To better illustrate these effects, Parks Victoria's new podcast, 'Closer to Nature', delves into how our parks are being affected and the innovative strategies we're implementing to safeguard these precious environments for future generations. You'll hear firsthand accounts from our expert park rangers, researchers, and passionate local community members who are witnessing these changes up close and are determined to help give nature a fighting chance. Tune into 'Closer to Nature' now, wherever you get your podcasts, and explore the untold stories that connect us all to nature: <https://closertonature.buzzsprout.com/>

From the Committee

September was an extremely busy month, with the Wednesday Wildflower Wanders, the Spring Camp in the Grampians and many activities associated with the Great Southern BioBlitz. This has been an exciting time and has provided an excellent opportunity to introduce new members and visitors to the wonders of nature. Many thanks to everybody who has organised these events and participated, with special thanks to Mez Woodward and Geraldine and Geoff Harris. Speaking of new members, we have what we believe to be a record number of members this year, a total of 106, but we always welcome new members, so do encourage your friends to join.

Our publications sub-committee has been hard at work on the 2nd revision of the 'Indigenous Plants of Castlemaine and Surrounds' brochure. Changes will include updated text and scientific names, and some new photos. We were pleased this month to have an opportunity to inform Lisa Chesters, the Member for Bendigo, and her office about our aims and activities, and to outline some of our challenges, including the need to obtain or pay for skills not held by members, such as specialist technology skills.

Our program coordinator is already working on the program for next year. If you have suggestions for speakers or topics you would like to know more about please let us know. Also let us know if you have an idea for an excursion or would like to help lead an excursion.

COMING EVENTS

Monthly meeting: Friday 11th October, 7.30pm

Uniting Church Fellowship Room, Lyttleton St.

“Birds on Islands – How they change over time. A New Zealand case study.”

Speaker: Euan Moore

Joint talk with BirdLife Castlemaine District.

Island fauna and flora generally lacks the diversity that is found on larger land masses but compensates for this with unique and sometimes unexpected adaptations. The talk will look at how species reach islands and how they evolve after they establish a population. It will also look at some of the changes since human settlement of New Zealand where there have been extinctions alongside human and natural introductions.

Observations: Members and visitors are invited to share their interesting observations at the meeting. Please email any photos to illustrate your report as JPEG file(s) to **Jill Williams** (jilliwill33@gmail.com) by noon on the day of the meeting.

Monthly Excursion: Saturday 19th October, 1.30pm

“Walmer biodiversity site” with Ian Higgins

Our October excursion is to a private property in Walmer that has uncommonly rich biodiversity and is not generally available to the public. The site is one of the few places where Bitter Cryptandra (*Cryptandra amara*) is in good numbers in the district. Our guide will be local environmentalist and plant expert Ian Higgins, who received the Australian Government Individual Landcarer Award in 2017 for his significant contribution to revegetation and environmental planning over a long period of time.

Meet: at the northern end of the Car Park, north of the Railway Goods Shed, Kennedy St, ready to leave at 1.30 pm. **NB** the date of this excursion is one week later than usual due to the property owners' availability.

Bring: Water, snacks, **clean** sturdy shoes, chairs and afternoon tea.



Erect-crested Penguin (*Eudyptes sclateri*), endemic to islands of sub-Antarctic New Zealand. *Photo: Euan Moore*



Muckleford Forest.
Photo: Cathrine Harboe-Ree

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club PROGRAM

See "Coming Events" page for more details about October events.

Fri 11th Oct, Meeting 7.30pm (Uniting Church Hall, Lyttleton St.)
Speaker: Euan Moore. "Birds on islands: How they change over time – a NZ case study". Combined CFNC Birdlife Castlemaine District meeting.

Sat 19th Oct, Excursion 1.30pm. Leader: Ian Higgins "Walmer biodiversity site"
NB the meeting point for excursions is now the Car park north of the Railway Goods Shed, Kennedy St.

25 – 27 Oct, Spring SEANA, Marysville. Enquiries: rncseana@gmail.com

Fri 8th Nov, Meeting 7.30pm Uniting Church **Chapel.** Speaker: Brian Bainbridge (Biodiversity Officer, Hepburn Shire Council), "Habitat restoration for the Bright-eyed Brown".

Sat 9th Nov, Excursion 1.30pm. Leader: Brian Bainbridge "Visit to a site in the Daylesford/Trentham area where habitat restoration has been carried out for the Bright-eyed Brown"

Mon 11th Nov 9am. Roadside clean-up.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES

Castlemaine Naturalist - email newsletter material to: newsletter.cfnc@gmail.com

* Deadline for the November edition: **October 25th**

Subscriptions (Membership forms on CFNC website)

Ordinary membership: Single \$35, Family \$50

Pensioner or student: Single \$25, Family \$30

Subscription includes the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist.

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