



**Australian
Plants**
SOCIETY NSW

Coffs Harbour Group



NEWSLETTER No. 141: April 2019

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Newsletter Contributions

If you have something of interest to share, please contact the Editor, Jan Whittle.

Keep up-to-date with news, Program of outings and meetings via our website:

www.austplants.com.au/Coffs-Harbour

Welcome to New Members

Roma Harris and Carolyn Cox

Membership Renewals Due NOW!

Renew online via APS website:

www.austplants.com.au

APS Members 2019: Photo by Angela Lownie



MONTHLY MEETINGS

*All meetings are held on Tuesdays in the Display Room, North Coast Regional Botanic Garden.
Please bring a plate of food to share. Tea and coffee will be provided.*

Tuesday, May 14: 10am – 1pm

Guest Speaker: Gwyn Clarke

Topic: Propagation Activity

We have had a few meetings on how to propagate plants. This meeting will be a revision and an opportunity to prepare some cuttings and plant some seeds. I will provide cutting material of reliable small plants and seed, pots, soil, hormone etc.

If you have a favourite plant you would like to grow please bring 6-10 stems from 5-15 cm long.

You will find herbaceous plants usually have only short stems. Put them in water as soon as you collect them and wrap them in damp paper towel to bring them. You will also need a sharp pair of snips or small scissors (not secateurs); some people like to use bonsai scissors.

Tuesday, June 11: 7pm – 10pm

Guest Speaker: John Ross

Topic: Myrtaceae family

Tuesday, July 16: 10am – 1pm

Guest Speaker: Coffs City Council

Topic: Weeds

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday MAY 25: 9.30am – Noon

Leader: Rowan McCabe

Location: Sherwood Nature Reserve

<https://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/sherwood-nature-reserve>

Sunday JULY 27: 9.30am

Tea Tree Plantation: Morrie and Fiona Duggan

Location: Braunstone south of Grafton

GET INVOLVED

Dead Tree Detective Project, Western Sydney University & University of New England

The aim of the project is to collect observations of dead or dying trees around Australia. It sounds a bit grim, but knowing where and when trees have died will help us to work out what the cause is, identify trees that are vulnerable, and take steps to protect them. This project will allow people Australia-wide to report observations of tree death. In the past, there have been many occurrences of large-scale tree death that were initially identified by concerned members of the public such as farmers, bushwalkers, bird watchers or landholders. Collecting these observations is an important way to monitor the health of trees and ecosystems. This project is contributing data to the *Atlas of Living Australia*.

Interested in this Citizen Science Project?

For further information go to:

<https://biocollect.ala.org.au/acsa/project/index/77285a13-e231-4b212-660c66c74bac>



Lindy Hills: CSIRO REQUEST



The CSIRO has requested seeds of the *Senecio amygdalifolius* (Almond-leaved groundsel) for use in fireweed trials. Seeds and a portion of the bush the seeds were taken from can be taken to the Seed Bank.

Nambucca Valley Landcare Call for Volunteers

Nambucca Valley Landcare, with the support of the NSW Environmental Trust, is implementing a bush regeneration project at Black Rock, Nambucca Heads. Black Rock is a beachside location with bushland that includes endangered Littoral Rainforest.

As part of this project Nambucca Valley Landcare are currently seeking interested community members who would like to attend one or more “Volunteer Bush regeneration and Weed Identification Sessions”. Volunteers will be fully supervised with demonstrations on the day including – bush regeneration and weed removal techniques. Nambucca Valley Landcare Coordinator, Logan Zingus and our Licensed Bush Regeneration Contractors will be in attendance for these sessions to supervise and pass on their knowledge and expertise. Nambucca Landcare will supply all protective equipment, tools, technical knowledge and morning tea or lunch.

Volunteer days will commence in April 2019 and will continue on a fortnightly basis through winter. If you would like to attend and/or would like further information please contact Manda or Logan at the Nambucca Valley Landcare office. PH 02 65 647 838 or email admin@nvlandcare.org.au

Events of Interest

March 30 – April 14

Botanica – 20th Anniversary Exhibition

Royal Botanic Garden Sydney <https://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/whatson/botanica>

May 26 9am – 2.30pm

OPEN DAY at North Coast Regional Botanic Garden

APS CH Stand: Botanical Book sales and Propagation Workshops

September 29 – October 4

2019 ANSPA CONFERENCE in ALBANY, WA <http://www.wildflowersocietywa.org.au/anpsa/>

ACTIVITY REPORT

Rob Watt: Visit to the Urunga Wetlands, 17 January 2019

In planning our outings for the year, the January outing always has the overarching necessity of being a place where we can be cool if it is an extremely hot day. And it was essential for the comfort of the 16 visitors who braved the forecast of an extremely hot day. The leader, Rowan McCabe deliberately started at 9.30am and we were well underway shortly afterwards.

And what a reward for an early start! This area was once the site of an Antimony Processing Plant that functioned only between 1969 until 1974, producing 400 tonnes of product but 160,000 tonnes of tailing waste which not properly managed and containing arsenic, lead and reagent residues of cyanide and cresylic acid led to leaching into the wetland. The result was large-scale die back of *Melaleuca quinquenervia* (Broadleaved Paperbark) and damage to the wetland habitat of birds and fish.

With work commencing in 2015, and \$10,000,000 later, it was completed and opened in May 2017. And this was no quick fix. The NSW Soil Conservation Service decided that about four hectares of land needed to be excavated – half was in the wetland and half the dry land – and having removed a total of 224 tonnes of antimony, arsenic, lead and mercury, a total of 36,400 ton of contaminated soil was placed in engineered containment cells located on the site under a grassy mound on the western side of the site, adjacent the car park. Planted around the edges are a variety of plants that will stabilise and provide a visual backdrop to the bulk of the restored wetlands.



Rob, Barry, John and Rosemary, with a splendid *Araucaria bidwillii* dominating us all



Looking east from the boardwalk: waterlilies and *Melaleuca quinquenervia*

Providing access to this area are 450m of level walkway with the pride of place being a 150m boardwalk that takes the visitor out over the water. Where possible the impact has been softened even physically on the boardwalk where Replas reconstructed plastic provides a softer surface for walking.

However, it is the plantings that make visiting such a rewarding experience. It is a master-class in how remediation should be undertaken. A very limited plant pallet has been used. Plantings have been placed densely allowing less room for weeds and a satisfying uniformity, but with a number of different effects achieved while on the walk.

Thus near the car park the selection of natives is extremely visually pleasing. In a mulched area *Grevillea* 'Golden Lyre' has been planted with a larger grevillea, probably 'Moonlight' behind. And then we quickly get into the practical task of edging the top path. Closely planted *Lomandra longifolia* provides a satisfying boarder with the grassy mound to the west while interesting plantings are made on the other side between larger remnant specimens of *Melaleuca quinquenervia* (Broadleaved Paperbark) and *Casuarina glauca* (Swamp Oak). What is interesting is that throughout this area there appear to be plantings of reasonably common grevilleas that break up the 'natural' look with the occasional burst of colour.

But following the western track we quickly arrive at the boardwalk and are led out through a mass of waterlilies, and in summer, a mass of blue flowers. These blooms are set off beautifully against the

darker, stained water. The boardwalk gives great vistas across the main watercourse to the regenerating swamp paperbacks about 100 m away. While we did not see a lot of birdlife on this warm summer morning, park documentation indicates quite a few species can be found there.



Gleichenia dicarpa (Coral Fern), also known as Tangle fern! Specimens of this plant were collected by [Joseph Banks](#) and [Daniel Solander](#) in November 1769 at Mercury Bay, New Zealand.

Leaving the boardwalk we have another experience – dense borders of *Gleichenia dicarpa* (Coral Fern). This particular plant keeps the traffic very much restricted to the path. Another of the common name: tangle fern says it all. However, as before, into this flora rarer species have been planted. For example, here was a Ribbonwood (*Idiospermum australiense*), clearly not there by chance. And walking past areas right beside the water, we proceeded into dense plantings of *Casuarina glauca* (Swamp Oak) assisted by their tendency to sucker. Various Eucalyptus species have been planted to introduce interest. One particular standout was the *Eucalyptus tereticornis* (Forest red gum), but also *E. microcorys* (Tallowood) and *E. robusta* (Swamp Mahogany). There was also a wood of various wattles: *Acacia sophorae* (Coastal Wattle), *A. fimbriate* (Fringe Wattle) and *A. irrorate* (Green Wattle). *A. fimbriate* has also been used very successfully around the raised containment mound containing the removed spoil, softening and integrating the two areas.



This is not a large site, with pathways and boardwalk meandering through, and over, a beautiful natural wilderness saved just in time. It will please all members of the family with good walking tracks and sufficiently different vistas to satisfy all. This field trip was thoroughly recommended and enjoyed immensely by those who attended. Thank you, Rowan, for making the area more widely known.

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### Jan Whittle: Grasshoppers!

This curious 'stack' of three grasshoppers was in a *Hibiscus* Barambah Creek in my garden.

Are the two females were competing for mating with the smaller male in the middle?

### Barry Kemp: Our Vanishing Flora

The last area of undisturbed heathland close to Coffs Harbour is apparently about to be destroyed in the name of "progress". On roughly 20 ha of the airport land, immediately south of the fenced area, about 100 heathland species have survived, largely due to being too close to the runway threshold for housing. The area adjoins the Boambee Creek section of Coffs Coast State Park and shares more than 100 other species in pockets of rainforest, open forest and swamp forest.

As access to the area is difficult, it has been "out of sight, out of mind". However, CHCC, which owns the land, is continually looking for ways to make money from the airport, and survey pegs have recently appeared, suggesting imminent "development" (probably factories). I had considered an APS excursion to the area, but there are problems I won't go into here. Perhaps a small, informal group would be more appropriate, if there is enough interest.

### Rob Watt: A Tribute to Alan Went

I didn't know Alan very well, as our attendance at APS functions only overlapped by two years or so. But he is a 'legend' to many in the Kalang Valley where he lived years ago. Very recently he called me to say that he would like to donate his botanical books to the Group. I quickly agreed and picked them up a day or so later. They were neatly arranged in numbered boxes, and he supplied a handwritten list with each book identified and numbered. (*Ed: some of this collection will be on sale on May 26, at the North Coast Regional Botanic Garden Open Day.*)

To learn more about Alan, I asked current members: 'he always seemed to be riding a bicycle' said Gwyn; 'he knew where the third largest tree in NSW was', said Janice. During his membership, Alan served as Vice-President and a member of the Committee. He wrote six reports on our outings, which are filled with his botanic observations. Within a year of joining he wrote a wonderful short article entitled "6 Months in the Life of a Novice Botanist" (No 94, Oct 2010). Here we learn of his interest in botany and why he joined the APS, together with his enjoyment of walking in the bush with like-minded others. Another article, "Looking at Eucalypts" (No 101, Dec. 2011) contained a list of the eucalypts within 100 km radius of Coffs Harbour. He begins that article tellingly:

*My German forebears probably have something to do with my penchant for completeness and lists (what has been described as "Teutonic Thoroughness"). So, it was no surprise that I was intrigued by the statement by local "Our Living Coast" co-ordinator that there were "100 species of eucalypts within 100 km of Coffs Harbour". Approximately 50% of this area is actually ocean and contains very few eucalypts so were there actually that many species and if so what were they? He proceeds to list 84 Eucalyptus species, 6 species of Corymbia and 7 species of Angophora and concludes: Flora of NSW (Vol.2, revised ed. 2002) lists 238 Eucalyptus species plus 10 species of Corymbia and 14 species of Angophora for NSW and records the eucalypts worldwide as greater than 800 (all but 16 endemic to Australia). Thus about a third of all NSW eucalypts are to be found within 100kms of Coffs Harbour.*

Thank you, Alan. You will be missed.

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