

EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER



APRIL 2018

NEXT EHG MEETING:

The amazing creatures living in our soil

Doug Rickard, APS Sutherland Group

Doug says: By the end of this talk I think that the audience will go away with a completely different view of these amazing little animals. I reckon that they may even have fallen in love with a few of them.

7.30 pm, Wednesday 4 April 2018

Please bring specimens for the plant table and something to share for supper!

LUGARNO-PEAKHURST UNITING CHURCH

909 Forest Road Lugarno (opposite the Chivers Hill Lugarno shops)

VISITORS WELCOME!

WELCOME to the April 2018 edition of the East Hills Group Newsletter.

This issue include notes from our March meeting and our plant table, and information about some activities that you may wish to add to your diary.

See you at the meeting, where we'll meet some of the beasts shown below! (Photos supplied by Doug Rickard.)

Jan Douglas
Editor



<http://austplants.com.au/East-Hills>

**Australian
Plants
SOCIETY NSW**



APS NSW Annual General Meeting and Quarterly Gathering



Saturday, 26 May 2018



10 am to 12 noon A choice of activities:

1 Ian Cox's garden: 5 Ivy Place Kenthurst (off Jones Road).

2 Bush walk with Jennifer Farrer:

Meet at the end of Trevors Lane Cherrybrook, which runs off Purchase Road. The walk leads to an extensive stone outcrop which overlooks Pye's Creek, where the large expanse of sandstone is a fun place to explore. The route passes through typical Hawkesbury sandstone vegetation, which includes *Banksia serrata*, *Corymbia gummifera* and *Eucalyptus haemastoma*. More Banksias, including *B. spinulosa*, *B. oblongifolia* and *B. marginata*, form the understorey. The main attraction of the walk in May, when few plants are flowering, will be the scenic outlooks along the walk.

Arrange your own lunch till 1 pm.

1 pm AGM at Gumnut Community Centre Gumnut Place Cherrybrook, NSW.

For the agenda, see page 31 of *Native Plants for NSW* January 2018 edition.

1.30pm Talk by Peter Olde: When is a *Grevillea* a *Hakea*?

Peter is a Life Member of APS NSW, recipient of the Australian Plants Award at the ANPSA Biennial Conference, Canberra 2015 and the leader of the *Grevillea* Study Group. He is an excellent and entertaining speaker who will discuss the current state of play regarding the relationships between the two genera. Peter will also discuss some of the new *Grevillea* cultivars and is always keen to share his knowledge of *Grevilleas* with us.

Australian native plants will be available for sale.

PLANT TABLE – MARCH 2018

Thanks to everyone who brought plant specimens.

Notes by Graham Walters.

Some plants on this list were covered by speakers on our members' night and so are not described here: Liz Cameron's article on page 4 gives information about the grasses, and David Crawford's presentation covered *Melaleuca hypericifolia*.

Austrodanthonia sp. (Wallaby Grass)
Banksia spinulosa (Hairpin Banksia) (Photo at right – Jan Douglas)
Entolasia marginata (Spreading Panic)
Eucalyptus erythrocorys (Illyarrie)
Eucalyptus ficifolia (Red-flowered Gum)
Grevillea ?lanigera (Woolly Grevillea)
Imperata cylindrica (Blady Grass)
Melaleuca hypericifolia – prostrate form (Red Hillock Bush)
Microlaena stipoides (Weeping Meadow Grass)
Oplismenus aemulus (Basket Grass)
Themeda australis (Kangaroo Grass)



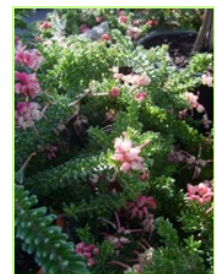
Eucalyptus erythrocorys (Illyarrie) Highly bird-attracting small mallee gum, 4-8 m tall, with outstanding large golden-yellow flowers in late summer to early autumn. Flower buds are bright red and the gum nuts are large and ornamental. It has sickle-shaped leaves and smooth creamy-brown bark. It responds well to pruning and can be trimmed to size and shape. Found naturally in the mid coast of Western Australia, growing on limestone soils, so best on alkaline soils. (Photo by h3six, Wikimedia commons.)



Corymbia ficifolia (Red-flowering gum) A tree to 10 m tall, usually small and straggly, with bark rough to the small branches, usually fibrous, rarely tessellated, brown to grey-brown. The flowers may be bright red, pink or orange. The large urn-shaped gumnuts are also a feature. The seeds are prominently winged. The other two species of bloodwood found in the south-west of Western Australia have wingless seeds. This species occurs naturally in only a small area of south-west Western Australia but is common in cultivation. (Photo by h3six, Wikimedia commons.)



Grevillea lanigera (Woolly grevillea) This species is usually a suckering or prostrate to erect shrub, up to 1.5 m in height. Bright or red pink flowers occur for most of the year, peaking in winter and spring. The plant is attractive even when not in flower. It prefers a position that is sunny with light shade, and tolerates a wide range of soil types. It occurs naturally in south eastern NSW, as far west as Bathurst, and in the ACT, in a wide range of habitats, usually in Eucalypt woodland and medium scrub. (Photo by Guitou 1214, Wikimedia commons.)



SOME NATIVE GRASSES IN GRAHAM AND LIZ'S GARDEN IN HURSTVILLE GROVE

Liz Cameron showed specimens of six native grasses growing in their garden.

Basket Grass (*Oplismenus aemulus*) has survived well during the recent dry months and forms a pretty ground cover in semi-shade. Liz admitted when weeding she is sometimes confused by the similarity of its broad pale green leaves with wavy margins to the leaves of Scurvy Weed, *Commelina cyanea*. However Basket Grass is shallow-rooted and easy to pull up, whereas Scurvy Weed has much more tenacious, fleshy roots. (Photo by Harry Rose, Wikimedia commons.)



Graham has encouraged Weeping Grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) to grow, interspersed with Ivy-leaved Violet (*Viola hederacea*), along a narrow strip between a brick wall and concrete driveway, where it is difficult to mow. In this location the drooping seeding stems rarely exceed 50 cm in height and it doesn't need much maintenance. Dave Crawford warned that the dry seeds stick very effectively to clothing and can be very uncomfortable as they attempt to penetrate the skin. *Microlaena* is a lovely grass and can be used as a lawn in shaded areas, but it can be a problem in garden beds as it self-propagates quite freely. *Microlaena* often grows with the introduced Veldt Grass *Ehrharta*, but *Microlaena* has a tough root system, the leaves are more bluish-green and feel slightly rough.

A taller grass is *Entolasia marginata* which has the rather alarming common name of Spreading Panic (which simply refers to the panicle inflorescence and growth habit). It can reach 2 m in height and the attractive deep green leaves grow at right angles to the stem. This grass grows sparsely, not forming dense clumps, and is an interesting feature in our garden. (Photo by Harry Rose, Wikimedia commons.)



Two grasses typical of native pastures are Kangaroo Grass (*Themeda triandra*) (left – photo by Peripitus, Wikimedia commons) and Wallaby Grasses (*Austrodanthonia* species) (right – photo by John Tann, Wikimedia commons). Both are tufted perennials that can form dense clumps which, in the absence of



herbivores, benefit from a vigorous 'haircut'. Kangaroo Grass has large spreading flower spikes and Wallaby Grasses have white fluffy seed heads. Neither has spread widely in our garden.



Blady Grass (*Imperata cylindrica*) (photo at left by Sphl, Wikimedia commons) is a common grass with large feathery seed heads and broad rough leaves. It is a perennial with long rhizomes which allow it to colonise new areas without seeding.

This makes it a useful grass to plant where weeds are rife because it tends to choke them out. Along with some other native grasses, this is the food plant of caterpillars of the Dusky Knight butterfly, *Ypthima arctous*, shown at right on an Everlasting Daisy (photo – Jan Douglas).



THE BUSINESS

East Hills Group meeting – 7 March 2018

Compiled from notes by Liz Cameron and David Crawford

The meeting opened at 7.50 pm with 13 in attendance. There were two apologies.

Our President, Graham Fry, welcomed everyone and reported on the APS NSW Special General Meeting and Quarterly Gathering, which several of our members had attended. All motions put at the Special GM were passed. Graham also mentioned Sutherland Shire's Plant selector which can be used to select native plants suitable for the Shire. See

<http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/Outdoors/Environment/Plants-and-Bushland/Native-Plant-Selector>

Our EHG meeting included presentations from several members, the plant table and supper.

Income at meeting: \$45 made up of \$21 from plant sales and \$24 from raffle tickets.

Members' presentations

- Graham Fry: Urban landscapes: where we live and how it has changed.
- Kyrill Taylor: Shared an article from the Sydney Morning Herald which reported on conditions imposed on the proposed freight hub at Moorebank to protect *Hibbertia fumana*. This species had last been documented in 1823, until its rediscovery nearly 100 years later.
<https://www.smh.com.au/environment/conservation/transport-hub-green-light-rare-plant-protection-20180306-p4z34f.html> A previous article on the strange circumstances surrounding the species' rediscovery is at <https://www.smh.com.au/environment/dont-rock-the-boat-rediscovery-of-plant-kept-under-wraps-as-project-approved-20170127-gtzrf3.html>
- Graham Walters: A variety of items related to plants, birds and conservation.
- Kate Porritt: Megafauna: About *Diprotodon optatum*, and real specimens! For more information, see <https://australianmuseum.net.au/diprotodon-optatum>.
- Tony Porritt: Risk comparisons: for example, which animals kill most people?
- David Crawford: *Melaleuca hypericifolia*.
- Liz Cameron: Native grasses in our garden (see article on page 4).

WESTERN WALKWAY OPENS IN MALABAR HEADLAND NATIONAL PARK

At our February meeting, Boyd Webster drew our attention to the official opening of the Malabar Headland Track. Graham Walters found an article about the Malabar NP, including its history and location, in the special Autumn 2018 issue of the newsletter of the Southern Sydney Branch of the National Parks Association. After a couple of false starts I found the newsletter online, and you can read the article, by Therese Weiss, here: <http://www.npanswssb.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Southern-Sydney-Newsletter-Autumn-2018-Special-Edition-121.2.pdf>

For more information about visiting Malabar Headland National Park, see

<http://www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au/visit-a-park/parks/malabar-headland-national-park>

The other Autumn 2018 issue of the newsletter includes an article with some photos of Royal National Park shortly after the January 2018 bushfire. You can find this article at

http://www.npanswssb.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Southern_Sydney_Newsletter_Autumn2018-No-121-ilovepdf-compressed-1.pdf

COMING EVENTS – CHECK YOUR DIARY!

You can find more district group events on the APS NSW website at <http://austplants.com.au/calendar>

Wednesday 4 April 2018 From 7 for 7.30 pm	East Hills Group meeting – Doug Rickard, APS Sutherland Group, on The amazing creatures that live in our soil (aka ‘Getting to know the neighbours’) Please bring supper to share and specimens for the Plant Table.
Saturday 7 April 1 pm	East Hills Group propagation meeting with Menai Wildflower Group. Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters. [click for map]
Wednesday 11 April 7 pm	Menai Wildflower Group – Dan Clarke on Conservation by APS NSW. Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters. [click for map]
Wednesday 18 April 7.45 pm	Sutherland Group meeting – Lloyd Hedges from Menai Wildflower Group on Flannel Flower propagation Gymea Community Hall, 39 Gymea Bay Rd, Gymea
Wednesday 2 May 2018 From 7 for 7.30 pm	East Hills Group meeting – EHG member Karl Schurr on the book ‘Dark Emu’ by Bruce Pascoe.
Saturday 26 May	APS NSW Annual General Meeting and Quarterly Gathering Cherrybrook. See page 2 for more information.
20th and 21st October 2018	12th FJC Rogers Seminar: The Goodeniaceae family. Horsham, Victoria. Registration commences 1 April 2018. For more information: https://apsvic.org.au/fjc-rogers-seminar/



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