

APS EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER



November 2018

NEXT EHG MEETING:

7.30 pm, Wednesday 7 November 2018

THE GREENWEB: CREATING HABITAT IN YOUR BACK YARD

Geoff Doret, Sutherland Shire Council

Geoff has been Sutherland Shire Council's Greenweb Officer since 2002. The Greenweb Program is part of a regional approach to the conservation of the Sydney basin's remaining biodiversity.

Please bring your questions, something to share for supper, and labelled specimens for the plant table.

LUGARNO-PEAKHURST UNITING CHURCH

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

VISITORS WELCOME

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

As usual, we have notes from our previous meeting, this time including a summary of Matt Hall's talk on Brush Turkeys in suburbia, and notes and photos from the plant table.

Dates for your Diary are on the last page, but see page 3 for information about the next major APS NSW activity on 10 and 11 November, which is just over a week away!

Happy gardening.

Jan Douglas
Editor

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



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you all enjoyed the wonderful rain even if it was a little inconvenient at times. Our garden has certainly appreciated it, with lots of new growth and of course lots of weeds suddenly appearing. It has been very strange weather as October is normally a very dry month and yet at the time of writing this note we have had 15 wet days so far this month.

Liz and I are off to Tasmania for two weeks at the end of October and so we will miss the November meeting. However Graham Walters and/or Karlo Taliana have agreed to run the meeting.

I attended a APS NSW Board meeting on Saturday 20th October. One of the main activities was to review APS NSW's performance and identify where we need to improve. One of the obvious conclusions of the review was how dependant APS NSW is on a very small number of people – the President, Secretary, Membership Officer, Treasurer and the editor of Native Plants for New South Wales. These people put in considerable time keeping APS NSW going and we have to find ways of reducing the burden on these people before they say enough is enough!

Finally, in December we will be having our East Hills Group annual general meeting which, as in previous years, will also include a non-botanical activity, probably a musical presentation. All the positions on our committee will be up for re-election and I strongly urge you to consider standing for a position – it's not a good look when a wife and husband are Treasurer and President respectively and are the signatories to our accounts.

Graham Fry
President, APS East Hills Group



Can you identify any of these plants?

The plant pictured at top left and centre belongs to a monotypic genus. – Editor.

SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER & SUNDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2018

This gathering will be hosted by the Sutherland Group at Loftus Community Hall,
119-129 Loftus Ave, Loftus NSW 2232
Talks, quiz, afternoon tea, plant sales
\$15 registration fee to help cover costs.

Saturday, 10 November

10.30 am – 12 noon **Visit to member's garden:** Meet at the garden of Joan Zande, **8 Bates Drive, Kareela.**

This is a beautiful formal style garden using Australian native plants and is a great example of what can be achieved on a typical suburban block with just a few challenges.

12 – 1 pm **Lunch. Bring your own.** Tea and Coffee will be available at the Community Centre.

1 pm – 5:30 pm **Meeting:** Talks, afternoon tea, trivia quiz, plant sales
Loftus Community Centre, 119-129 Loftus Ave, Loftus NSW 2232

Guest Speaker: Lawrie Smith AM will make two presentations:

- **Principles of Garden Design,** and
- **Shared Experiences: a career in Landscape Gardening.**

Afternoon tea will present a good opportunity for members to socialise with plant enthusiasts from across Sydney and further afield.
It is anticipated that native plants will be available for sale.

Trivia quiz conducted by Karlo Taliana to test your plant related knowledge.

Sunday, 11 November

***** This activity will be dependent on a show of interest on Saturday.*****

Visit to Kamay (Botany Bay) National Park. Kamay National Park is 20km by road from Sutherland, around 30 minutes driving time. **Park entry fee is \$8 per car** payable at the gate (coin machine) or at the visitors' centre. **Bring your own morning tea and lunch.**

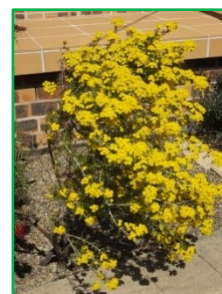
9.30am Meet at the Kamay-Botany Bay Visitors Centre car park at for an easy walk across to the coast and return to the visitors centre (total 2.5km). On this walk we will be looking for some of the 130 plant species that Joseph Banks and Daniel Solander collected when they visited Kamay-Botany Bay with Captain James Cook in the Endeavour in 1770. The target for the day will be to see a minimum of 50 plants from the Banks list.

FROM OUR OCTOBER MEETING PLANT TABLE – OCTOBER 2018

Thanks to everyone who brought along plant specimens.

Another spectacular plant table full of spring flowers! As usual, Graham Walters has provided notes on a few of the plants.

Callistemon sp. (Bottlebrush) (Photo at right: K Porritt)
Chrysocephalum apiculatum (Yellow Buttons)
Chamelaucium x *Verticordia* 'Paddy's Pink'
Chorizema ilicifolium (Holly Flame Pea)
Dendrobium pugioniforme syn *Dockrillia pugioniformis* (Dagger Orchid)
Dendrobium gracilicaule (Delicate Dendrobium)
Eremophila calorhabdos (Red Rod Emu Bush)
Eremophila mackinlayi (Desert Pride)
Eremophila muelleriana (Round-leaved or Pound-leaved Eremophila)
Grevillea excelsior (Orange Flame Grevillea)
Grevillea georgeana
Grevillea scapigera
Hakea multilineata (Grass-leaf Hakea)
Hibbertia scandens (Snake Vine or Guinea Flower)
Hibbertia stellaris (Star Guinea Flower)
Isopogon formosus (Rose Cone Flower)
Leptospermum 'Love Affair' (Photo above right: K Porritt)
Melaleuca nodosa (Prickly-leaved Paperbark)
Melaleuca shiressii syn *Callistemon shiressii*
Pileanthus vernicosus (Coppercups)
Pimelea rosea
Verticordia galeata
Verticordia insignis (Photo above right: K Taliana)
Verticordia nobilis (Photos at right: K Taliana)
Verticordia ovalifolia (Oval-leaf Featherflower)
Verticordia plumosa (Plumed Featherflower)



***Chrysocephalum apiculatum* (Yellow Buttons or Common Everlasting)**

This everlasting perennial herb is found in all Australian states and territories in a wide range of environments. The flowers and leaves of this species vary considerably in colour, shape and size, as does the size of the whole plant. The plant is decumbent, that is, the stems are prostrate but turn up at the ends. Silky hairs cover the stems and leaves, giving the plant an overall grey-green appearance. The flowers are a bright golden-yellow and occur on the tips of the stems and rise up to 15cm above the ground in compound heads up to 2.5cm wide. The plant is very useful in providing a bright splash of colour for much of the year. Propagation is easy from cuttings taken at any time of the year.



(Photo: Warren and Gloria Sheather <https://austplants.com.au/Chrysocephalum-apiculatum-Common-Everlasting>)

***Eremophila calorhabdos* (Red Rod Emu Bush)**

This attractive very drought-tolerant shrub has an interesting habit with long upright stems like spears or rods. Careful pruning can encourage it to be more dense but still retain the unusual upright habit. Bright pink to red nectar-rich flowers occur in winter and spring. In heavier soils it is advisable to form raised beds or plant in containers. Very good for cut flowers.

(Photo: Warren and Gloria Sheather

<https://austplants.com.au/Eremophila-calorhabdos-Red-Rod>)



***Grevillea scapigera* (Corrigin Grevillea)** This is one of Australia's most at-risk species, known only from a few small populations, mainly on road verges in the wheat belt of Western Australia. There are distinct differences between the various populations, mainly in the foliage. Prostrate habit, may spread to about 2m in diameter. It is difficult to grow in areas with humid summers, but some success has been achieved with grafting. Strikes readily from cuttings.



Flower detail: J Douglas



Plant: K Taliana



Flowers and butterfly: K Taliana

***Hakea multilineata* (Grass-leaf Hakea)**

This large shrub or small tree, up to 5m tall, has linear leaves up to 20cm long by 15mm wide with numerous parallel veins. Bright pink flowers occur in winter and spring, growing in racemes about 5-7cm long in the leaf axils. These are followed by woody seed pods about 2cm long. The plant grows best in an open well drained sunny position but will tolerate some shade. It is easily grown from seed. It is best suited to areas with low summer humidity, but grafting onto *H. salicifolia* has proved to be very successful, enabling it to be grown in previously unsuitable areas.



(Photo: Warren and Gloria Sheather <https://austplants.com.au/Hakea-multilineata>)

FROM OUR OCTOBER MEETING
BRUSH TURKEYS IN SUBURBIA

Matthew Hall

Matthew Hall is a research student at the University of Sydney. His thesis title is Urban Habitat Use and Ecological Effects of the Australian Brush-turkey (*Alectura lathami*).

Notes by Liz Cameron.

Matt's very well-prepared presentation about his research on Brush Turkeys began with a brief history of Brush Turkeys, whose distribution extends from Cape York to the Illawarra. They were traditionally hunted by Aborigines but following European colonisation their numbers built up until the food shortages of the Great Depression led to the birds and their eggs being hunted almost to extinction. There were a few small populations in forested national parks in the 1980s, then numbers started increasing and Brush Turkeys spread into suburbia, even though cities are dangerous places for birds adapted to the rainforest.

Brush Turkeys are large ground-dwelling forest birds belonging to the same family of strong-footed mound builders as the Malleefowl. They are omnivores that dig and rake soil for their food. Fast runners but awkward fliers, they roost in trees at night, often socially. Their lifespan is thought to be more than 10 years for those that survive to adulthood, which is reached at about 10 months.

Male Brush Turkeys are territorial and build nest mounds that weigh up to 3 tonnes and are basically huge compost heaps. They try to maintain the internal temperature of the mound at 33°C, which results in a balanced sex ratio of chicks; temperatures substantially higher or lower result in the sex ratio of hatchlings being skewed. Mound-building starts in July and in the breeding season from August to December, males develop large yellow wattles and the skin on their heads becomes intensely red. The males encourage as many females as possible to lay in their mounds and females also lay in multiple mounds. One female can produce as many as 18-24 eggs in a season; the eggs weigh about 180g and contain a large yolk that nourishes the developing chick to the stage where it is self-sufficient at hatching.

The chicks hatch by pushing against the shell with their big feet until it cracks. Then they have to dig their way up out of the mound, emerging after two days. There is no parental care after hatching and the chicks scatter to look for food and shelter. At this stage they are very vulnerable to predation by foxes, goannas, dogs, cats and birds of prey; about 90% are predated.

Some of the theories for the increase in Brush Turkeys are: a population rebound after hunting ceased; the trend to bushy suburban gardens planted with native species; fox control (but this doesn't explain the extent of the population growth); territorial males driving young males out into new areas; and people feeding wildlife (but only a few people feed Brush Turkeys and don't maintain it once they discover how invasive they can be).

Matt is studying the distribution and population of Brush Turkeys in Sydney, why and how they are spreading into urban and suburban areas, how they use the habitat, and what effects they have on the environment. One of his methods is placing numbered wing tags on Turkeys in the area between Sydney Harbour and Ku-ring-gai National Park; another is using GPS tracking. He showed a map of the current distribution of Brush Turkeys in Sydney; most of the records are north of the Harbour, but Turkeys have been reported as far west as Mount Drutt and there is a population in Wollongong. Already a few individuals have been sighted in the Georges River area and Matt predicted it will be only a few years before Brush Turkeys are established in southern Sydney. He encouraged East Hills and other APS members to become involved in his study and help document this colonisation by Brush Turkeys. There are several ways to contribute to the study - download the Brush Turkey app to report sightings and behaviour, and report birds with numbered wing tags.

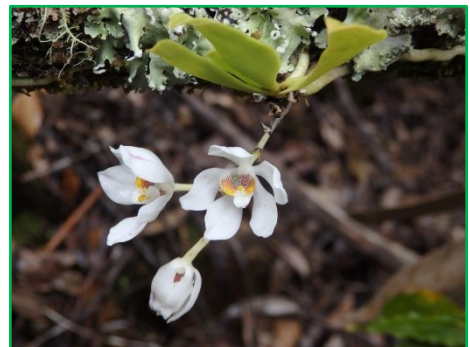
<https://www.spotteron.com/brushturkeys/info>

<https://www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au/science/the-wingtags-project/report-a-turkey>

Matt Hall can be contacted at: brush.turkey2@gmail.com

Matt also provided a link to some tips for dealing with Brush Turkeys in your garden (see below). We may need them: an Oatley resident recently sent Georges River Bushcare a photo of a male Brush Turkey in her garden! - Editor.

> http://www.kmc.nsw.gov.au/About_Ku-ring-gai/Land_and_surrounds/Wildlife_and_Fauna/Native_species_profiles/Brush_Turkey



And what about these plants? Can you name the genus, even if not the species?

THE BUSINESS

East Hills Group meeting – 3 October 2018

Lugarno–Peakhurst Uniting Church, Lugarno

Notes by Liz Cameron

The meeting opened at about 7.40 pm with 18 in attendance including three visitors – the speaker and two of his friends who have been assisting in his research. Apologies received from Jan Douglas and David Crawford.

Income at meeting:

| | |
|---------------|-------------|
| Plant sales | \$54 |
| <u>Raffle</u> | <u>\$30</u> |
| Total | \$84 |

Graham introduced the guest speaker Matthew Hall, who had been nominated by his supervisor, Dr John Martin. Matt gave a very well-prepared presentation on his research on 'Brush Turkeys in Suburbia'.

Business matters:

Graham thanked all the members for their contribution to the success of the APS quarterly gathering on 22nd September, hosted by East Hills Group. Visitors to Sylvan Grove commented on the spectacular display of native flora there and Graham acknowledged David Crawford's role in promoting it as the venue for the spring gathering.

At the quarterly gathering, the sale of plants propagated by Karlo raised a very impressive \$315 for East Hills Group, and plants supplied by Menai Wildflower Group raised a further \$92. MWG supplied two trays of Waratah seedlings, some of which were sold and others will be potted up at the next propagation day at the Menai Wildflower Group facility at Illawong Fire Station, which is scheduled for Saturday 6th October.

Members were reminded of the October meetings of Menai Wildflower Group and Sutherland Group.

Graham and Liz will be away for the November meeting of East Hills Group, so there was discussion of forward planning for the Christmas function. Marie O'Connor has offered to organise the meal but will be away in November so she will prepare a list of what is needed and circulate it by email; Kate Porritt offered to collate the responses at the November meeting. Graham Walters will check the availability of his grand-daughters' folk-singing group, 'The Fossickers', to perform at the Christmas function.

There is no scheduled speaker for the November meeting but Graham Walters offered to try to source someone at short notice; otherwise it will be a night for members to contribute short presentations on pet topics.

Graham Walters spoke briefly on the significant environmental role played by Woylies (Brush-tailed Bettongs) in pre-European Australia, based on information from the Australian Wildlife Conservancy. Woylies once occurred through the inland from Western Australia to the western edge of the Great Dividing Range in eastern Australia. They and other small nocturnal arid-zone marsupials were very effective in improving soil conditions by foraging for underground fungi as well as tubers, bulbs and seeds. Because they can store food items in their cheek pouches for later caching or eating, they dispersed plant seeds and fungal spores. Their diggings also increased water infiltration to the soil, and allowed seeds and organic matter to be trapped, facilitating plant recruitment.

Meeting closed at 8.45 pm and was followed by another spectacular plant table of spring flowers, the drawing of the raffle, and supper.

COMING EVENTS – CHECK YOUR DIARY!

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

| | |
|---|---|
| Saturday 3 November 1 pm | East Hills Group propagation session with Menai Wildflower Group. Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters. [click for map] |
| Wednesday 7 November from 7 pm for 7.30 pm | East Hills Group meeting: Geoff Doret on creating habitat in your back yard. |
| Saturday 10 November Sunday 11 November | APS NSW Seminar supported by Sutherland Group. A garden visit, a great speaker, trivia with Karlo, a themed walk in Kamay Botany Bay National Park (Kurnell) – see page 3 for details. |
| Wednesday 14 November 7 pm | Menai Wildflower Group Meeting. Emeritus Professor Robert King on Magnificent Mangroves . Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters. |
| Wednesday 21 November, 8 pm | Sutherland Group meeting: Tony Porritt on Interesting Plants of the Top End. GyMEA Community Hall, 39 GyMEA Bay Rd, GyMEA. |
| Wednesday 5 December | East Hills Group AGM and Christmas meeting. |

EAST HILLS GROUP CONTACTS

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

