



APS HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER NEWSLETTER - July 2022

**NEXT HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER EVENT:
Wednesday 3rd August from 12:30 pm**

**Please note this is a mid-week event
Postponed Malabar dune walk
and Malabar National Park walk
With chances to socialise over lunch**

Please RSVP to Liz on elsmere02@gmail.com in case of cancellation.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Welcome to the July 2022 edition of the APS Harbour Georges River Group Newsletter. I didn't think the newsletter was going to be very big this month, but a few last-minute items turned up to fill it out.

We seem to be having a bit of a bird theme for a change. It just turned out that way. Our July bush crawl was washed out and replaced by an indoor lunch. Let's hope our next meeting at Malabar will be more successful. Hope to see you there.

Dorothy Luther, Editor

In the spirit of reconciliation, the APS Harbour Georges River group acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

<https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River>

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Happy gardening,

As the weather has improved recently, we can finally have our meeting at Maroubra & explore another part of our patch. Thanks to Boyd's efforts in checking the area & speaking to Emily Strautins about the bushcare work at South Maroubra Dunes.

In our back garden, I am very happy to have discovered one of our Xanthorrhoea trees is developing a flower spike. It will have finished growing by the garden visits in October. Looking forward to seeing you next Wednesday at our monthly meeting.

Warmest regards to all,

Marie O'Connor.

President Harbour Georges River Group APS NSW.

**Map 2: Sydney's Eastern Suburbs -
remnant native vegetation & open space**



© C. Beffington, 2002. Sources: Sydney 2000 MBD Street Directory, Stree Parish Sydney Australian Discovery Map 1994 observations.

Map showing the east coastal walkway, including the now completed section around Malabar Headland that we will be exploring on Wednesday. Its one of the few patches of native vegetation (in dark green) left.

NEXT MEETING

August Wed 3rd - Malabar Dune Walk

From Boyd, our man in Maroubra:

The plan for the day will be that of the postponed April meeting:

12.00 Meet at picnic shelters adjacent to South Maroubra Surf Club, for BYO lunch.

12:30 to 1 pm approximately - Talk/ demonstration of bushcare restoration of South Maroubra sand dunes.

1.30 For those able - walk around Malabar headland - boardwalk sections, guided by Boyd. Details depend on the state of the boardwalks

In between today's showers (Saturday 23rd) I walked down to South Maroubra beach.



2 today's rainbow over the Malabar headland



1 The picnic area on Arthur Byrne Reserve where I suggest we meet.

South Maroubra Surf Club building is in the background, parking area is adjacent to this. The road into the parking area is at the roundabout at the junction of Marine Parade and Fitzgerald Avenue, Maroubra Beach.

Since getting home [from the UK], I have made contact with Emily Strautins, Randwick City Council Bushcare officer. She has confirmed that she can come over to show our group the bushcare work at South Maroubra Dunes. She will come over after she has finished her morning bush care session - between 12.30 and 1 pm she estimates.

Malabar National Park walk.

The track out to the Eastern Malabar Headland boardwalk was very muddy today. If it is not better on August 3rd, we may have to just do the Western Boardwalk. This has lots of steps up from the Arthur Byrne Carpark to a sandstone outcrop that looks out over the rifle range. It does not have the variety of flora that we would see on the Eastern Boardwalk that follows the coast line.

Weather report is looking a bit better for this coming week. [Let's hope the rainbow lives up to its promise. –Editor]

Contingency Plan

Since La Nina is hanging about still, we need a plan in the event of heavy rain. Please advise Liz by email on elsmere02@gmail.com if you are intending to come to the event so we can let you know if there is a change of plans.

Our Plan B is to have a Zoom meeting on Wednesday evening and talk about mistletoes, so make sure Liz knows to send you the link, in case we do that.

Plants for Sale

There are no plants for sale this month. Our propagation officer, Graham Fry, returned from a trip to Adelaide & Melbourne with a mild case of Covid so he & Liz are in quarantine. Marie is babysitting the plants, but we are unable to provide a list. Many of the plants are being reserved for our visit to the Revesby Workers Garden Club in August, where we hope to sell them.

LAST MEETING

Inner West 'PUB' Crawl (Patches of Urban Bush)

Sunday 3rd July, from 10.00 am

Thanks to Liz Cameron for the following:

The plan was to visit a bush regeneration project in our patch - the Inner West Environment Group (IWEG) Bushcare program along the light rail line, Dulwich Hill to Hawthorne, hop on hop off - lots of things flowering, lots of coffee shops!

Due to heavy rain – even the Harvest Markets were called off – our outing was cancelled. Instead, we had a meeting indoors. The group were most grateful to Dorothy for throwing open her home at short notice and hosting ten members and friends at a most enjoyable lunch and talk prior to the HGR business meeting. We welcomed Billie Ayling - an APS member living in Croydon who has been affiliated with the North Shore group but is interested in joining APS events closer to home.

After lunch Jo Blackman and Chris King from IWEG gave us a rundown on the work of the Group and described the urban bush regeneration we would have seen along the Greenway if the weather had been fine.

They shared before and after photos of successful plantings of natives around the former Waratah Mills (now an apartment complex) <http://www.iweg.asn.au/waratah-mills.html> and the 6 other sites where IWEG undertakes Bushcare along the light rail line.

See below for examples:



3 Waratah Mills Site 2002. photo by Bruce Ashley



4 The Site in 2008, photo by Bruce Ashley

Chris and Shelley, another IWEG member, shared copies of the Photo Guide to the Birds of the GreenWay brochure and described their regular bird surveys.

http://www.iweg.asn.au/uploads/2/8/1/4/28144487/greenway_birdos_web.pdf

A remarkable number of small birds and some unusual large ones have moved into the area as a result of the bush regeneration work.

Ana brought her microscopes – a full microscope and a stereo one used for dissecting. We were fascinated by the details of flower shapes under the stereo microscope and the intricate shapes & details of the pollens on microscope slides. All those diagrams of the sex organs of flowers make sense when you can see the real thing and the variety of arrangements & shapes that occur. Thank you, Ana for lugging them over from your place for us to see.

GROUP NEWS

Attracting Birds to your Garden

From Graham Fry

We all grow native plants for various reasons – for their beautiful flowers, easy maintenance, growing rare plants, etc. I grow them primarily to attract wildlife.

As I like birds, I have kept a daily record of bird observations and so it is easy to see changes over time.

When I moved into where I now live nearly 40 years ago, there was one native plant in the garden, a *Grevillea banksii* hybrid, but notwithstanding the lack of native plants, native birds were common. We had a resident superb fairywren population and influxes of honeyeaters and silvereyes when a large cotoneaster in the backyard was in fruit. Not surprisingly there were also plenty of exotic birds: flocks of sparrows were common as were spotted doves, common mynas and starlings.

Over a few years all the exotic plants were removed and the last plant, a jacaranda, died about 5 years ago. We now have in excess of 200 native plants in the garden with many small flowering grevilleas which were selected for small honeyeaters. Sadly, I wish I could say that the revegetation project was successful.



It was for a period until around 2000, when noisy miners arrived and as is the norm with these birds, they drove out all the little birds. All we were left with were large birds: parrots, red wattlebirds, kookaburras, magpies and in recent years crested pigeons. Very occasionally a spinebill will sneak in but they are attacked as soon a miner spots them. Despite the lack of little birds, we still get a lot of pleasure from our birds. In recent years satin bowerbirds have become regular visitors particularly during the winter months. They love to have baths even on cold July mornings!

We are fortunate that we adjoin a small council reserve in which I have planted a strip of native vegetation along the fence which follows our boundary.

A few weeks ago, I heard some weird sounds from this strip and looking over the fence found a male satin bowerbird building a bower. He had gathered a collection of blue bottle tops and pegs and carefully arranged them on the ground and was starting building his display arena. I managed to get some low-quality photographs, see attached. It was very rewarding to have a relatively uncommon bird using an area which we had created to attract wildlife.



So our original goals of attracting native fauna has been successful, virtually all the exotic birds are gone except for a small population of common mynas which even the noisy miners cannot move. However, like most aspects of natural history it is not easy to create habitat that is ideal for all animals.

Carol's Zig Zag Wattle

Carol sent me these lovely photos of her prize Zig Zag wattle, in full flower. Thanks to <https://www.gardeningwithangus.com.au/acacia-macradenia-zig-zag-wattle/> for the following information:

A winter flowering wattle, *Acacia macradenia* is an attractive medium shrub with bright yellow flowers and zig-zagged branchlets, giving it an interesting architectural form.

Grows best in a well-drained soil in sunny or lightly shaded positions. Best grown away from native bushland because it does pose a risk of becoming a weed outside of its native range (inland southern and central Queensland).



I asked Carol if it produced seedlings. Her reply:

“No not at all.

I have been growing them for about 15 years and only once got a seedling. Perhaps too cold for them here. They are hard to find commercially. My husband tracked them down and the nursery had to grow them from seed for me. I had to wait about 6 months for them and had them posted to me from around Glen Innes somewhere. They only live for about 8 years, so the original has died, and the seedlings from that and another are now getting on a bit. I have planted lots more to replace the 2 mature trees that I have.”

The ANPSA Conference in September

ANPSA Biennial Conference, Kiama, Saturday 10 to Friday 16 September 2022

APS NSW is hosting the Australian Native Plants Society Australia (ANPSA) Biennial Conference at the Kiama Pavilion in September 2022. Registration is now open, and speakers announced.

Highlighting presentations by Costa Georgiadis and Clarence Slockee, from Gardening Australia; leading botanist and ecologist Professor David Keith; Forest ecologist Professor David Lindenmayer; Grevillea Study Group leader Peter Olde and Eremophila Study Group leader Lyndal Thorburn.

For more details - <https://www.austplants.com.au/ANPSA-Biennial-Conference-2022>

We have received a plea from Peter Olde, president of the Menai Wildflower Group:

“I am writing to encourage members to assist APS NSW to run the ANPSA Biennial Conference at Kiama in September.

Sutherland Group has members already volunteering to organise day trips, speakers, decorating the pavilion and lots more, but we need more volunteers.

Don't feel intimidated - there are lots of jobs. Checking people on and off buses, manning phones, giving out information, moving vases or chairs around the hall are just the tip of the iceberg."

To volunteer contact Margaret Gaul at mgaul7@gmail.com.

NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

There is a lot happening in our patch, with community groups and local councils being active in promoting native plants. My plan is to feature a local group or event each month. I welcome contributions - stories about your other favourite groups.

Community Garden Project

The Campsie Earwood Clemton Park Congregation (CECP) of the Uniting Church wish to create an indigenous community garden as a meeting place and listening space and plant it with indigenous fruit trees and other plants. They are planning the garden at Clemton Park Uniting Church, 6 Dunkirk Avenue, Kingsgrove, (Corner of Miller St). They intend to use permaculture principles to build the garden.



Figure 5 The Church grounds - photo from Google Maps, so a bit out of date. There is now a sign on the street corner.

Karen & I met with the Minister, his daughter (permaculture student) & the chair of the Church committee recently to help clarify their aims & objectives. The plan is to start small and develop the garden bit by bit, so that there are tangible results delivered frequently. There is quite a bit of work to improve the soil quality and so the first steps will be focused on this. There will be a combination of native plants and more traditional garden plants, as the community will feel more comfortable with their traditional plants initially. The community includes a mixture of Tongan, Greek & Lebanese.

APS HGR will be involved in this project to some extent – initially using Dorothy's project management skills to help plan & set up the project. We may also be involved in providing plants for the garden later. Karen is researching suitable plants & sources, as she is volunteering at the Marrickville Community Nursery.

If you have experience in using permaculture principles to build a native plant garden, please contact me by reply email. Also, if you are interested in propagating plants or have any native food plant seedlings available, we'd love to hear from you.

Saving the Magpie Tree

When someone wants to cut down a tree in the Inner West, there is a storm of protest:

“As a long-time resident of Lewisham, it has come to my attention that you are planning to remove 3 *Eucalyptus nicholii* trees from Jubilee St, Lewisham.

I am asking you to reconsider this decision on the following grounds:

1. The tree species is listed as vulnerable under the Biodiversity Conservation Act.



Figure 6 The Magpie Tree - photo by Dorothy

2. The trees are not actually dying; they are suffering from stress due to the excess rain of the past year. The first tree near Victoria St in particular, is sprouting new growth. Their native habitat is on slopes & ridges where they are better drained.

3. The trees are habitat for our community of magpies, which sit in them & sing joyfully, thereby cheering the whole neighbourhood up, something we all need at the moment.

Please do not remove our trees. It will be years before new ones reach that size. Prune the dead branches by all means, but please don't cut them down.”

The trees are actually native to the New England Ranges, where they grow in depleted granite on slopes & ridges – not exactly like a clay-based street verge.

Seedling recruitment is common, even in

disturbed soils – maybe I should look for some seed pods, although they flower in late summer to early autumn.

Let's hope the new trees are more suitable to their environment. They have planted Water gums (*Tristaniopsis laurina*) in the next street.

The Great Southern BioBlitz 2022

As mentioned last month, HGR has been approached to participate in this Citizen Science project, over the weekend of 28 to 30 October. We have now been advised that they have a project that covers most of our area. We await further information from the local organisers as to what is involved.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

These are items of general interest found on the World Wide Web. All contributions for future editions gratefully accepted.

Since we're having a bird theme this month, here is another one:

Sea Eagle Cam

A pair of sea eagles has been nesting in the bush at Homebush Bay for a number of years. Its near the Birdlife Centre and they've set up a camera system so you can watch every



7 taken from the Live Feed 20 July, midday

agonising & ecstatic moment of their lives. Each year they lay 2 eggs & attempt to raise the chicks, with varying success. The chicks aren't given names, just sequential numbers. The current ones are called SE29 & SE30, so they've been nesting for a few years. There is a worldwide audience, particularly at hatching time, which has just occurred, and the scientists are learning a lot about sea eagle life. If you'd like to have a peep, here is the live link <https://www.seaeaglecam.org/video.html>

To see SE30 hatching on YouTube, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcmJDuCPQQQ> and scroll forward to 7 mins.

There is also a Facebook page which is updated frequently with progress & statistics on their behaviour. <https://www.facebook.com/Sea.EagleCAM>

You see comments like "Watching them gently feed the babies is so beautiful. They are helping this battle-weary nurse keep smiling when it's been difficult lately."

They even have their own book, published on 2020.

Share your favourite sources on our Facebook Group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1328674687627886/>

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Newsletters Received – July

The full text of the APS newsletters is available from the APS website, on the District Group pages – usually under ‘Resources’

Australian Plants Society, Parramatta Hills NSW Group - Newsletter July 2022

Review of “A Wide and Open Land - Walking the Last of Western Sydney's Woodlands” Author: Peter Ridgeway; about fungi; Wollongong Botanic Garden Tiny Forests; Sydney’s seed bank – moving and collecting; Saving Sydney’s rarest eucalypt from extinction

Australian Plants Society, Northern Beaches NSW Group - Newsletter July 2022

More on fungi; presentation by Trevor Wilson on *Ajuga australis* – is there more than 1 species?; on scientific names

Australian Plants Society, Armidale NSW Group - Newsletter Summer 2022

[for some reason known only to the technology, we haven’t been getting these. So now we have 2]

“The past three years have been somewhat Biblical with drought, floods, pestilence (mice), pandemics and now war. We certainly live in interesting times”.

Torrington Conservation Reserve after the Fires – interesting regeneration; A New Book on NSW Orchids – the product of years of work; nursery & garden visits.

Australian Plants Society, Armidale NSW Group - Newsletter Autumn 2022

Flowers from the Arboretum; The Judean Date Palm: extinct tree resurrected from ancient (2000-year-old) seeds – both male & female plants are now growing; more about orchids; The fruits of scientific analysis - swamp foxtail (*Cenchrus purpurascens*) is a native and a new eucalypt discovered.

Australian Plants Society, Sutherland NSW Group - Newsletter July 2022

June meeting - Identifying native plants – tips and resources by Rhonda Daniels; large plant table.

Australian Plants Society, South East NSW Group - Newsletter May 2022

Weeds! - every garden has them, how to identify and treat them. Members meeting – lots of stories about plants, and a night vision wildlife camera.

Other Groups Newsletters

We have begun to swap newsletters with other environmental groups in the Harbour Georges River area. Links to their web sites are provided where available.

Australian Flora Foundation – Newsletter, July 2022

Determining flower trait preferences, distribution, and seasonality of hoverflies (Diptera: Syrphidae) **using observations from iNaturalist**. Some species of native Australian hoverflies have mobile adults that visit flowers for food and larvae that prey on aphids, making them stand out as a dual service provider of both pollination and pest control in crops. <http://aff.org.au/results/newsletters/> - this edition not posted yet.

National Parks and Wildlife Service – Naturescapes, July 2022

An emergency services training operation in Budderoo National Park (Jamberoo - Illawarra) unfolded into a real-life search and rescue mission for the **threatened and rarely seen waterfall greenhood orchid** (*Pterostylis pulchella*). During the 10-hour expedition we saw around 300 orchids growing on mossy rocks right at the water's edge. Only one plant was recorded there in 2015 and only one before that in 1954.

Wolli Creek Preservation Society

<http://www.wollicreek.org.au/wp-content/wolliupload/July-Update-2022-lossy-max.pdf>

Quarterly newsletter on activities to protect the Wolli Creek Valley. The ongoing battle with Sydney Water has entered a new phase. Covid & the wet weather are wreaking havoc on the walking tracks. Hundreds more locals have been using the tracks during lockdown for their exercise & to walk their dogs. Fox's Lane permanent public art work in Ashfield called "There Will Always Be a Light On for You" includes a lantern for Wolli Creek featuring the Wolli Creek possum logo. The next fungal foray is to be on Saturday 30th July.

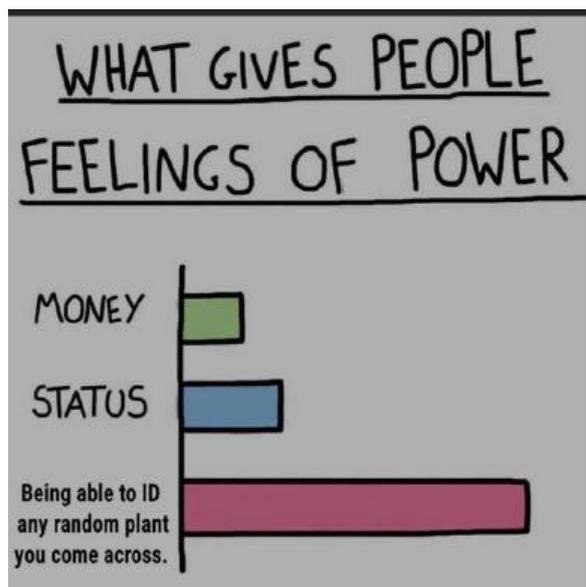
Message from Glenda Browne, the APS email manager:

NCC are organising a monster NSW wide picnic, on Sunday 16th October. They would like the APS groups to participate. "The wider event will consist of **dozens of simultaneous picnics** in as many towns in New South Wales as possible. We're involving numerous groups, including larger groups and organisations, as well as many smaller environmental and community collectives. Each individual local picnic will be jointly run and organised by local groups in each area, with support from the NCC. We've got a huge variety already involved, from large non-profits, to small specialized local community groups, including here in Sydney. We would love for the Australian Plants Society to be involved in this event and co-host a picnic for nature where convenient, and educate and engage the public (and other environmentalists) on your work and our beautiful flora."

There has not as yet been any direction from the Board on this proposal. There may be something in the next state e-newsletter.



9 from Armidale Summer Newsletter



8 from Armidale Autumn newsletter

COMING EVENTS

For further details of coming district group events, please see the APS NSW website at <http://austplants.com.au/calendar>

Sat 30 July	Wolli Creek Preservation Society fungal foray. Contact info@wollicreek.org.au for details.
Wed 3 August, Noon	Harbour Georges River outing to Malabar Headland Meet at the picnic shelters adjacent to South Maroubra Surf Club
Wed 17 August, 8 pm	Sutherland Group meeting on Spring Flowers GyMEA Community Centre, 39 GyMEA Bay Rd, GyMEA.
every Tuesday 9 - noon	Menai Wildflower Group propagation team – all welcome. Illawong Rural Fire Station Native Garden, 999N Old Illawarra Rd, Illawong. https://www.austplants.com.au/Menai-Activities
Sat Sept 10 to Fri 17 Sept	ANPSA Conference, Kiama Pavilion, with tours before & afterwards https://www.austplants.com.au/ANPSA-Biennial-Conference-2022
Sun 9 Oct, 9am to 3 pm	Stony Range Regional Botanic Garden, Spring Festival – walks, plant sales, advice, activities. 810 Pittwater Rd, Dee Why
Sunday 16th October	NCC Picnic events across NSW
Fri 28 to Sun 30 Oct	The Great Southern BioBlitz 2022

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<https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River>