



APS HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER NEWSLETTER - November 2022

NEXT HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER EVENT:
Tuesday 6th December from 7 pm
Note evening meeting, face to face
Christmas Party
Annual General Meeting
At Earlwood Uniting Church Hall
16 William Street, Earlwood
With an opportunity to socialise over coffee
VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Welcome to the November 2022 edition of the APS Harbour Georges River Group Newsletter. This is our last newsletter for 2022 as Christmas is upon us. Hope to see you at our Christmas party.

This edition includes a summary of the year and what a year it has been, even just within our group. It's been a year for storming things and we've stormed out of our shells in East Hills and out into the wider community. Have good break and best wishes for the festive season.

Then we start all over again in 2023.

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>

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Its been a big year for storming:

The Americans stormed the Capitol.

Russia stormed into Ukraine.

The independents stormed the Liberal Party.

The Sri Lankans stormed the presidential palace.

Kiribati stormed out of the Pacific Forum.

And lots of rain storms too.

Storming the Bastille Celebration in France – July 14



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Its that time of year when its time for a review of 2022.

In spite of COVID and monsoonal rains, we managed to hold 10 meetings (including our Christmas meeting), mostly outdoors. Two were held via Zoom and one became an impromptu lunch at a member's home. Only 2 have been held in a church hall, unlike previous years. Only one was cancelled due to rain.

We have welcomed 15 new members, 12 new to APS, the other 3 were orphans. A number of members haven't attended our activities so far and we look forward to meeting them in the new year.

We have reached out to a number of local bush care groups including the Wolli Creek Preservation Society, the Bankstown Bushcare Society and the IWEG Greenway group. We have increased our relationship with neighbouring APS groups Sutherland, Menai and Parramatta Hills.

The group is growing and we look forward to a great 2023.

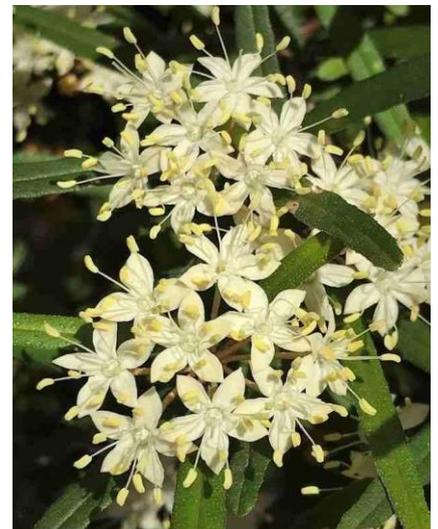
Best wishes for the Christmas season.

Happy Gardening to all.

Marie O'Connor President HGR APS.



Sylvan Grove Sept 2022, Eucalyptus impressa, photo by Ana



Sylvan Grove Sept 2022, Phebelium squamulosum photo by Karlo

NEXT MEETING

The Christmas Party

The gathering will include a light Christmas meal; please bring something to share. To help with catering, it would be appreciated if you could RSVP Liz Cameron (elsmere02@gmail.com) by Tuesday 29th November with an idea of what food you will be providing.

There will be entertainment and singing as well as eating and talking.

We will also hold our Annual General Meeting & planning for next year during the event, so come along to have your say about next year's activities.

Where



1 The Earlwood Uniting Church Hall

We're meeting at the **church hall** of the Earlwood Uniting Church. 16 William Street, Earlwood. **It is 2 doors up from the church** (away from Earlwood shops). It's a large space with a good kitchen, tables & chairs & a stage.

There is some parking in the street or the shopping centre car park is encouraged.

Bardwell Park station is the nearest train station, with a hill climb to the hall. There are buses along Homer Street through the Earlwood shops.

The Annual General Meeting

All positions will be declared vacant and Trevor Jennings (minister of Campsie, Earlwood and Clemtan Park Uniting Churches) will conduct the elections. Most current office-bearers have expressed willingness to stand for re-election but Liz Cameron (Secretary) would be very happy to hand over her role to another HGR member.

The positions and current occupants are:

Elected Positions: President: Marie O'Connor; Vice-Presidents: Graham Fry, Dorothy Luther; Secretary: Liz Cameron; Treasurer: Graham Fry

Appointed positions: Board Delegate: **vacant**; Newsletter Editor: Dorothy Luther; Web site editor: Dorothy Luther; Propagation Officer: Graham Fry; Speaker Co-ordinator: **vacant**; Hospitality: Liz Cameron; Committee Member: Karen Fong; Plant Table Recorders: Boyd Webster, Dave Crawford

We could also look at other roles such as propagation coordinator (for our backyard propagators) and a new member officer (splitting the secretary role).

The role of the Secretary

From Liz in the March 2022 newsletter:

“One of my chief duties is to record the minutes of general, annual general, and committee meetings of our group. Another important role is keeping in touch with members & welcoming new members.

As APS evolves, I see the need for the secretary to be more tech savvy, become familiar with the great range of resources on our website, and contribute to expanding HGR’s activities. I encourage younger members of Harbour Georges River to consider becoming more involved in the day-to-day running of our group with the prospect of taking over, and expanding the role of Secretary.”

From the District Group Operating Manual:

Secretary – Responsible for general administration and maintaining records of meetings. Producing correspondence as required. The secretary advises the APS NSW Secretary of the names and contact details of each of the office bearers. The secretary (or events coordinator) should notify the group and state webmasters of their program of activities, allowing these to be added into the respective calendars. Normally this happens at the start of the year.

Planning for 2023

At the November meeting, it was agreed that next year we should hold indoor evening meetings every three months or so. Outdoor gatherings might continue to be scheduled for different days of the week. Ideas for HGR meetings next year (many suggested by Dorothy Luther):

Suggested Outdoor Events:

- Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney (in Spring)
- Muogamarra (in Spring; group bookings required prior to visit)
- Native vegetation of Wolli Creek valley
- A ‘PUB’ (Patches of Urban Bush) Crawl along the GreenWay in Inner West Sydney (cancelled in July 2022 because of wet weather)
- ‘PUB’ Crawl with Bankstown Bushland Society
- Environs of Cooks River
- University of Sydney campus - native plantings

Suggested Talks (via Zoom if necessary):

- Environmental Officers from local Councils incl. Robyn Young, Canterbury Bankstown Council
- Local areas administered by National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Bushcare sites in local reserves
- Native orchids (Graham Davies, Sutherland)
- Re-wilding project by University of Sydney, in North Sydney.

LAST MEETING – PLANT PROPAGATION

Propagation from Cuttings

Graham Fry described and demonstrated various methods of propagation of native plants, from both cuttings and seeds.

The general principle for cuttings success is to trick the cutting into producing roots rather than leaves.

You will need:

- Cuttings, from semi-soft stems, about 3-4 mm thick and about 8 cm long. You can often take 3 or 4 from one stem. Cut each one just below a leaf node.
- Propagating mix – everyone has their own mixture of sand & organic matter, but include vermiculite to aerate the soil & retain moisture.
- Small, clean pots to plant into, about 10 to 12 cm tall.
- A 'glass house' to keep the cuttings relatively warm and moist & protect from the elements. This can range from a plastic bag or large drink bottle to a plastic tub to a \$2000 propagation bench with a built-in watering & heating system.
- A 'podger' to make holes in the potting mix to plant the cuttings in. [a pencil or small tool handle work].
- Root growth hormone – this is subject to much debate & is not necessary but tends to speed things up. There are several kinds.
- A container of water to soak the cuttings in.
- A sharp knife to scrape the bottom section of the cutting.
- Labels for your cuttings to show the species & date planted. You can cut strips from white plastic containers or coreflute & use as pencil or permanent marker.
- Record keeping system – plant species, when planted, how long until roots appeared, what you fed them with, etc, so you can improve your success rates over time.

Making cuttings

Prune the cutting back to a bare minimum – half a dozen leaves, remove any flowers, cut large leaves in half.

Scrape a strip of bark off the bottom 2 cm of the cutting – the 'wounded area'.

Soak the scraped part in water for a minute and then dip in the rooting compound.

Make a hole 4 cm deep in your potting mix with the podger, place the cutting in & gently tamp the soil around it. You can put several cuttings in 1 pot.

Place the 'glasshouse' in a warm sheltered spot such as a windowsill or verandah.

Water gently with a fine spray to keep the soil & air moist. In summer, watering might be twice a week, in winter, once a week.



While collecting, you can store cuttings in a sealed plastic bag with some water in a cool spot or the fridge for a few days.

Potting On

After about 3 months, your cuttings have hopefully developed roots. You may be able to see them coming out the bottom of the pot. Otherwise, tug them gently. If they resist, they have roots. They need to be separated out & potted individually into larger pots.

If you have several cuttings in 1 pot, put the whole lot into water to allow the roots to soak out of the soil & carefully separate the plants from each other. Then you can extract each plant without damaging the roots.

Pot individually into a potting mix, again with vermiculite in it. Keep your plants in the greenhouse & feed once a month. It takes 2 years to grow a cutting to sale stage, so have patience. You may need to prune your plants to maintain a good shape.

When growing well, remove them from the greenhouse to harden off in an open area.



Some members of the audience tried their hand at propagating some 'easy' plants including Hop Goodenia (*Goodenia ovata*) and Coastal Rosemary (*Westringia rosmarinifolia*).

Marie O'Connor demonstrated methods of propagating the swamp orchid *Phaius australis* from the flower stems, with which she has had great success; Ebony later took the flower spike to have a go at propagating it. Marie's plants originated from a flower stem that Kyrill Taylor had brought to an East Hills Group meeting some years previously.

Karlo Taliana provided valuable further information based on his wide and very successful experience of propagating natives.

Propagating from Seed

Some species won't grow from cuttings, so must be propagated from seed. Graham has had little success with raising plants from seed. Karlo has had more success, by using the propagating facility run by the Menai Wildflower group of APS. Lloyd Hedges, the supervisor, invites us to use the facility at any time <https://www.austplants.com.au/Native-Garden-and-Nurseries> They also teach how to propagate at the IRFS Compound Nursery in the afternoon of the 3rd Saturday of each month.

Native plant seeds can stay in the soil for a long time until the right conditions occur for sprouting. Growing from seed is about tricking the plant into believing the time is right. This can require a variety of methods such as placing in boiling water, abrading the seed to remove the tough coating, smoke water, refrigeration, sun drying. ...

After 40 years of the Society for Growing Australian Plants and its descendants, plant propagation still seems more like Mediaeval witchcraft than a scientific process.

The following products help, and are the main components of seed propagation mixes:

Vermiculite is a naturally occurring mineral silicate with many industrial uses. In gardening, its benefits are to absorb & retain moisture and assist with aerating the soil.

Perlite is a naturally occurring glass, which expands greatly when heated. It has high permeability [*a measure of the ease of passage of liquids eg water through the material*] and low water retention and helps prevent soil compaction. It is used as a medium for

hydroponics and for starting cuttings. As perlite contains silicon dioxide, goggles and silica filtering masks are recommended when handling large quantities.

See links under RANDOM JOTTINGS for further details.

Plant Table

The plant table had a spectacular variety of flowers and Marie and Graham provided cuttings for identification and propagation. Dorothy brought aromatic herbs from her garden and Boyd, with input from Karlo, wrote notes on the plants for the newsletter. Many tip cuttings and flowers were brought in for members, including those listed below.

<i>Actinotus helianthi</i>	Sydney Flannel Flower
<i>Backhousia anisata (Syzygium anisatum)</i>	Aniseed Myrtle
<i>Chamelaucium x Verticodia 'Paddy's Pink'</i>	Wax flower
<i>Chrysocephalum apiculatum</i>	Yellow buttons
Dianella sp.	Flax lily
Graft chimera probably originating from <i>Eremophila mackinlayi</i>	Desert Pride
<i>Grevillea arenaria</i>	
Grevillea 'Kimberley Gold'	
Grevillea 'Moonlight'	
<i>Homoranthus flavescens</i>	
<i>Melaleuca hypericifolia</i>	Hillock bush
<i>Melaleuca thymifolia</i>	Thyme leaved Honey Myrtle
<i>Ozothamnus diosmifolius</i>	Rice flower (Pink form)
<i>Pelargonium australe</i>	Native Storksbill (Purple flower)
<i>Phaius tankervilleae var australis</i>	Native swamp orchid
<i>Ricinocarpos pinifolius</i>	Wedding bush
<i>Scaevola aemula</i>	Fairy Fan flower

Backhousia anisata (Syzygium anisatum) Photographed are the white flowers of this slow growing tall tree (to 25m in northern NSW forests – less in cultivation). The crushed leaves have an aniseed perfume and have been used as a bushfood spice – anise myrtle. Commercial plantations have been affected by myrtle rust.



Backhousia anisata



2 *Grevillea 'Kimberley Gold'*

Grevillea 'Kimberley Gold'. This hybrid developed from the West Australian native grevilleas – *G.wickhamii* & *G.miniata* may grow to 3 m in height & width in a sunny garden position. Members saw the shrub with its characteristic grey-green holly shaped leaves and yellow inflorescence in the October visit to the O'Connor front garden. On the APSNSW website are further details written by Dan Clarke with a much better photograph taken by Marie. <https://resources.austplants.com.au/plant/grevillea-kimberley-gold/>



3 *Homoranthus flavescens*

Homoranthus flavescens The garden photo shows this low shrub with branches layered laterally. The cutting on the plant table demonstrated the yellow flowers in clusters standing up from the grey-green leaves. Nectar at their base attracts birds. A NSW native propagated from cuttings.

Ozothamnus diosmifolius On the plant table was a pink flowered form of the rice flower. The shrub may grow up to 2m, usually with clusters of white flowers. Pink colouring may fade in full sun. A hardy plant that grows in most soils; it has been propagated from both cuttings and seeds. Used commercially as cut flowers. [see over for photo]

Scaevola aemula One of the *Scaevola* species on the plant table, the photo shows the fan shape of the mauve petals, yellow at their base. Occurring naturally as a spreading herb, commercial forms are becoming available. Propagated from cuttings of new growth.

(Notes by Boyd Webster)



4 *Ozothamnus diosmifolius*



5 *Scaevola aemula*

GROUP NEWS

Plants from October



Visitors to the O'Connor garden may have noticed a yellow flower in the back garden pond. This was on a plant purchased by Marie as *Villarsia* - Golden Marsh Flower. *Villarsia* are a genus of aquatic flowering plants in the *Meyanthaceae* family. They are mostly native to Australia with a few seen in South East Asia and South Africa. *V.exaltata* and *V.reniformis* are two forms sold in water garden nurseries. In both, the yellow flower is born on a pedicel above the waterline. It has five fringed petals.

(Photo – Marie O'Connor, Notes – Boyd Webster)

New Member – Andy Leigh

Welcome to Associate Professor Andy Leigh. In her words:

I am a plant ecologist at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), who teaches ecology and researches how plants cope with temperature extremes. I have known about ANPSA but didn't know there were regional chapters. I work in plant ecology research as an academic but joining APS is for pleasure (like Gardening Australia which is my non-negotiable TV hour every week). I'm from Ngunnawal country (ACT) originally so still learning about Sydney flora.

I'm flat tack until the end of the year. In academia, teaching is only one component of our work, so when teaching semester stops, we have to ramp up everything else.

Aside from collaborative work I do at Mt Annan Botanic Garden and RBG Sydney (the latter is genetics work), much of my field research is based outside Sydney. I have given a couple of invited talks about my research, but if you're looking for deep knowledge about the local Sydney flora, I'm afraid that isn't me. You could have a look at my profile



6 Andy Leigh at Gundabooka Oct 2020 photo Peter Jones

(<https://profiles.uts.edu.au/Andrea.Leigh>), which, aside from my research, has a couple of links aimed at the non-academic sphere, including a little YouTube video and a Branch Out podcast interview. That would give you a bit of an idea of the kinds of stuff I do.

Ana's Christmas Card

I am one day away from my trip to Europe. [sent 23/11/22]



Thanks very much for the lovely time and learning experiences I have had with you all through this year. I have enjoyed our meetings very much! and for the many more to come!

I want to wish you a nice Christmas APS_HGR gathering, a lovely time together with your family during Christmas time and above all a very productive, happy and rewarding 2023.

Garden Supplies

Ashlie Stevenson, a member of HGR, has donated to our group, a lot of garden supplies (smallish amounts in opened packets) including potting mixes and plant foods etc. She is moving to smaller accommodation and can't take them with her.

Liz will make a list and email it to members shortly. The goodies can be collected from our Christmas Party / meeting on 6th December. HGR members can use them, or the garden at Clemton Park UC.

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.

Wolli Creek Bush Regeneration

Bushcarers of the Wolli Valley have 6 sites within the Wolli Creek Valley. The groups meet monthly on various days and are supervised by experts. This is a great opportunity to learn about bush care and get your hands dirty with some real planting and weeding. Some sites employ professionals as well as volunteers.

There is a brand new group in Turrella Reserve, only a few minutes walk from Turrella Railway Station. This is a good opportunity for those who are yet to attend a site to come along and be part of a whole new group. The other sites range from Bexley North to Undercliffe near Tempe.

For more information, contact Peter Semple, the coordinator at bushcare@wollicreek.org.au or Mobile 0411021440. He can provide you with a registration form, details of the sites & the contact for the supervisor of each site.

Threatened Species Recovery Plans

The Guardian has reported that there are hundreds of threatened species recovery plans expiring in the next six months.

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/27/tangled-mess-of-inaction-hundreds-of-threatened-species-recovery-plans-expiring-in-next-six-months>

The Federal government is considering how to reform Australia's flawed system of environmental protections. Under resourcing, disagreement with state governments, and the growing list of species threatened with extinction. have constrained the federal environment department's ability to get on top of a backlog of conservation work.

Great Southern Bioblitz

We received this report from the coordinator of the recent Great Southern Bioblitz (GSB), which was held in late October from the 28-31st. The event was a great success with, 6,111 observers participating in the third edition of the GSB, a global bioblitz for the southern hemisphere. The participants came from 26 countries, across 3 continents and speaking 3 different languages! The event is a great opportunity to engage the public in biodiversity awareness and harness the power of citizen science to gather biodiversity data within your region.

GSB 2022



A preliminary summary of the GSB2022 is now available on our website. Please take time to have a look (<https://www.greatsouthernbioblitz.org/gsb2022highlights>)

The surveys registered 212,608 observations (including 127,000 of plants) across 23,380 species.

GSB2023 will be held on November 24-27th 2023, and we're invited to participate.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

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

Sources of Propagation Information

APS HGR Newsletters for Mar & Apr 2022 – home propagation kits in plastic boxes:

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

<https://anpsa.org.au/plant-propagation/>

a good overview of all propagation methods with diagrams & photos. It includes a list of references for further research.

<https://www.anbg.gov.au/PROPGATE/plant01.htm>

This is a 16 page pdf published by the Australian National Botanic Gardens as a learning resource, intended to advise teachers on appropriate planting techniques for different Australian Plants. p. 9-11 is a list of plant genera with recommended propagation techniques - when to plant, ease of propagation and seed pre-treatment required.

As well as general information on how to propagate plants from cuttings, it also contains information on collecting seeds & how to propagate plants from seed.

Facebook Groups

Australian Native Plant Noticeboard & Marketplace

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1322985077769408>

Posts for this Group may include APS meetings and Plant Sales, other meetings, sales, courses, etc that are about Australian Plants, Job vacancies, etc. Members may also wish to engage in Buy/Sell/Swap activities using this group to find other likeminded people.

Australian Indigenous Plant Identification

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1469859343324569/>

A place to share photos and information on Australian native plants.

Forest of the weird:

ET sponges & soft corals in the deep Pacific Ocean



ET sponges and soft corals make up what scientists have named the 'forest of the weird' in the deep Pacific Ocean. Photograph: 'National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) | Office of Exploration and Research (OER)'

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Newsletters Received – November

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

Australian Plants Society, Menai Wildflower Group - Newsletter November 2022

An herbarium is a collection of pressed plants that acts as a reference for the plants of an area.

In 2023 meetings of MWG will move to the first Saturday of the month at 2pm.

Another Saving our Species project is starting up focusing on micro bats. Small, insect-eating bats are found in remnant bushland which provides hollow-bearing trees, clean water and green spaces.

Because of their voracious appetite for insect pests – mosquitoes, biting midges and crop pests, they help gardeners and agriculturists.

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

Report on APS NSW Get together in the Southern Highlands – talks, bushwalks and gardens; some amazing garden visits in the South East area.

Australian Plants Society, Sutherland NSW Group - Newsletter November 2022

presence of koalas in the Royal National Park.

Congratulations to Illawarra Group. From small beginnings, the group has been attracting many new members. Now the group feels confident about its future and have elected a committee and are progressing full speed ahead with aims, objectives and activities.

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

the Noxious Weeds category name has been changed to Priority Weeds. for regional priority weeds, please refer to the web site:

https://greatersydney.ils.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/722368/Greater-Sydney-Regional-Weed-Mgmt-Plan-29-June-2017_FINALweb-res.pdf

Researchers discover new plant species in the heart of Sydney www.rbg Syd.nsw.gov.au November 3, 2022. A new sword sedge species grows in some of Sydney’s most iconic locations – near Manly, Cooks Landing at Kurnell and inside the Royal National Park, but it is found nowhere else.

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.

Bankstown Bushland Society's Spring 2022 edition of The Bushland Bulletin

Review of Peter Ridgeway’s recently published book, “A Wide Open Land” is the most important publication on Western Sydney’s bushland since the Urban Bushland Biodiversity Survey of 1997.

The battle to save the Voyager Point bushland/wetland complex; mountain bike tracks round Yeramba Lagoon.

Save our Flora <https://saveourflora.weebly.com/> Gallery of Rare and Endangered Flora. [Please hover over the image or click on it for the species name, Bulletin no. for description and other information]. bulletins [list of pdfs – currently up to #47 from June 2022]

COMING EVENTS

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

Tues 6th December, 7 pm	APS HGR Annual General Meeting and Christmas gathering at Earlwood Uniting Church Hall, 16 William Street, Earlwood
Sat 10 Dec, 5 pm	Menai Wildflower Group End of Year Function from 5pm at the fire station.
Sun, 11 Dec	Sutherland end of year gathering at Joseph Banks Reserve, Kareela.
Wed, 15 Feb, 2023	Sutherland Group Meeting



7 a murmuration of birds - not an alien invasion by giant dogs!

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