



CALGAROO

Newsletter of the Parramatta & Hills District Group
Australian Plants Society NSW Ltd

Eucalyptus parramattensis - Calgaroo

November 2020

Next Meeting Saturday 28 November 2 pm Gumnut Hall Gumnut Place Cherrybrook

This has been a year like no other any of us have experienced before. We started off the year with our AGM in February which included a presentation on frogs by Kathy Potter from the Frog and Tadpole Study Group. Little did we know that this would be our last time meeting face to face as the lockdown soon had us all isolated in our own homes. The NSW Region purchased a professional version of Zoom software which was made available to all District Groups to use. In June we used the Zoom software to host a members' meeting at which Brian Roach spoke on Native Plants in Containers. Eleven members attended this meeting.

Somewhat discouraged by this small number our Committee thought that it might be safer to be outside as we all knew what inside looked like. So in the following months we organised three bushwalks to look at rare and endangered species in our area. Attendance at the walks has averaged 13. Then in October we visited a local nursery specializing in unusual plants. The number of people who came to that activity was 11.

We really want to know what members would like to do in these COVID times. Maybe you don't want to come to any activities. We would like to know that too.

The next meeting is planned to be in the covered outdoor space at our usual venue of Gumnut Hall. Come along and tell us how you think we should plan our activities for next year (which will continue to have COVID-19 restrictions). Tell us about the successes and failures in your garden, some flowers you saw in the bush on a walk or pick other members' brains to solve any problems you are encountering in your garden.

We have always made our last meeting of the year more festive with a shared afternoon tea. We can still do this but

we need to restrict the food we bring to share together this time by following these rules.

No dips.

No shared utensils

No cut and come again pates and cheeses or cakes

Instead bring individual items such as mini quiches, spring rolls, party pies or finger sandwiches, cupcakes, individual slices etc.

Please bring your own cup

Jennifer Farrer



Lesley Waite and Chris Coe amongst the ferns at Mother Earth Nursery

Group Visit to Mother Earth Nursery, Kenthurst

On Saturday morning 24th October, eleven of our members met Mark Massey the owner of Mother Earth Nursery. This is a general nursery which Mark has owned for only 2 years. From the beginning Mark wanted to create a different nursery, selling unusual, rare and endangered plants from all around the world, including Australia. This little nursery is jam packed with a huge array of species, and Mark knows a great deal about them all. Some of the plants he propagates himself. The rest he buys from a large number of smaller wholesale nurseries, and many are specialists in the production of certain very unusual plants. He apologised for fairly low stock numbers of Australian plants. He had sold almost all the native stock!

At the start we saw *Prumnopitys ladei*, and vulnerable, pretty conifer from Far North Queensland. It is a primitive plant quite closely related to the Wollemi Pine, and is dioecious, ie has separate male and female trees. It can be grown in Sydney in a protected spot. Like the Wollemi it needs water, but not too much, and not too often. There were Wollemi Pines nearby. Mark recommends planting these amongst plants which are higher, to discourage them from growing too tall too rapidly. We were also shown a tiny South African strap plant with pink flowers mass-planted in the pot, and the rare Brazilian *Begonia venosa*, which grows in very hot dry conditions, unlike almost all other begonias. It has blue flowers

Mark then led us to the packed fern and palm area. Along with a variety of *Dicksonia* and *Cyathea* species he grows the endangered King Fern, *Angiopteris evecta*, the largest fern in the world. It comes from Queensland and needs protection and water. Botanists have recently decided that there is a coconut native to Queensland, with genetic differences from those from our tropical neighbours. The coconut also features in some ancient indigenous rock paintings.

Moving out into the open areas, we were shown the native currant, *Antidesma erostre*, a number of finger limes, *Microcitrus australasica*, and a Davidson's Plum with non-furry leaves. The hairs on the more common *Davidsonia jerseyana* can trigger allergic skin reactions, and the non-furry species is *Davidsonia johnsonii*. Mark said that he would normally have a range of grafted grevilleas and eremophilas, but there were only a few left.

He sells *Adenanthos sericeus*, including a prostrate form. In his opinion this species needs more regular watering than most Western Australian plants. When fully stocked he has 3 colour forms of *Hardenbergia violacea*, purple, white and yellow. Apparently the yellow one grows locally in Glenhaven.

Mark is very conscious of quality control in his plants. Watering is all by hand to ensure the correct amount for each species. He uses and highly recommends Rock Minerals from an Australian company for fertilising.

Mark is a fount of knowledge and the visit was enjoyed by all.

Pip Gibian



Mark surrounded by Wollemi Pines

ANPSA CONFERENCE POSTPONED

The organising committee of the ANPSA Biennial Conference has made the difficult decision to postpone the September 2021 Biennial Conference to September 2022.

While heartened by the reductions in transmission of Covid-19 around Australia, planning for the conference has continued to be difficult due to:

- APS members tend to be from the 'higher risk' category and uncertainties about a vaccine

- Challenges with travel given changing restrictions, particularly other states and internationally.
- The changing social distancing requirements at the conference and on buses, with flow-on impacts to tours, excursions and of course costs
- A digital conference is not a good alternative given how important social interaction and exploring the region's flora are at these conferences.

The new dates for the Conference are: Sunday 11 September to Friday 16 September, 2022 and the theme continues to be: Australian flora - past, present, future.

AUDREY TAGGART'S CALLISTEMON



I am not sure who in our group remembers Audrey Taggart, and particularly her beautiful pink callistemon. I have grown it from a plant table leftover many years ago, and we have a large, old one at our property in Gloucester, which flowered beautifully this year. Audrey and her husband retired to the Central Coast where she became a very active member of the APS group there, particularly championing the technique of deep planting for regeneration purposes. I met her from time to time at events like the Mt Penang garden shows, where the group usually had a whole large tent display and Audrey would be giving talks on deep planting. Her callistemon flowered so beautifully this year I sent photos to the secretary of Central Coast, asking if they could be passed onto Audrey. Audrey now has some dementia and is in a nursing home near her son

and daughter-in-law at Penrith. My photos reached her and son Bruce sent me this photo.

Pip Gibian



Audrey with her son Bruce and his wife Tanya on the banks of the Nepean River at Penrith this year.

Bruce told Pip that the Callistemon was propagated from a tree growing in the house where Audrey grew up on the banks of the Cooks River in Earlwood, Sydney. So it is special to the family and has been propagated many times by Audrey.

Audrey Taggart is a Life member of the Australian Plants Society. (Ed)

MONASH CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNICATION RESEARCH HUB

the Climate Change Communication Research Hub at Monash University. Monash University is publishing Australia's first climate column in community newspapers across Australia, to discuss local climate trends and break down the science of climate change.

The columns feature a range of community voices who talk about their experience of climate or weather changes and how they have been affected. They aim to collect contributions from residents, volunteers and various groups which will have a unique perspective.

They have invited any of our members who are interested in contributing to complete a short five minute survey. You can complete it by clicking this link: <https://bit.ly/clim&survey> or you can email mess@monash.edu to arrange an interview via phone or zoom. The person to contact is Amy Jenkin.

AFRICAN LOVE GRASS RESEARCH PROJECT

We have received a request through NSW Region office from the NSW Weeds Research Unit for assistance in collecting seed from native species of *Eragrostis* for a research project into possible biological controls for African Love Grass. Part of the research includes assessing the impact of any biological control on native species of the genus. If you are aware of any local native populations of *Eragrostis* and would be interested in participating I will forward the collection specifications to you. Jennifer Farrer

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL BOTANIC GARDEN'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of the ANBG in October 1970 by the Prime minister at the time, John Gorton. Australia Post has commissioned a postage stamp issue to celebrate this occasion. The issue consists of two standard postage (\$1.10) stamps featuring native plants, *Grevillea iaspicula* and *Banksia marginata*.

Grevillea iaspicula is found only in the Wee Jasper area of NSW and is listed as “critically endangered” under Commonwealth legislation and “endangered” under NSW legislation. It was first collected in 1966 and only named in 1986. Many of its remaining populations are found on private land. Potential threats to its survival are grazing, weeds, fire and drought, and it is thought that it will not survive without human intervention. The specific name is a Latinised version of Wee Jasper.

Banksia marginata is found in Eastern NSW, around Victoria and into South Australia and Tasmania. It is not endangered. The common name for this species

is “silver banksia” after the white colour of the underside of its leaves.

Jane March in *Caley* Newsletter of The Northern Beaches Group



Grevillea iaspicula Photo Murray Fagg



Banksia marginata

FERAL HORSE MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK

Linda Groom from the Reclaim Kosci Campaign addressed our meeting last year and told us of the damage caused by feral horses to the flora of Kosciuszko National Park.



Wild Horse Wallow

Since then the NSW government has committed to preparing a plan for the management of the horse population in the park which was due for release this year. The office of the NSW Minister for the Environment has recently told the Campaign that the draft plan has suffered a further delay - until 'February/March 2021'.

A new [NSW Parliament e-petition](#) has been launched seeking action on out-of-control feral horse numbers in Kosciuszko National Park. Since the last horse petition was presented to the NSW Parliament in August 2019, the park remains without a horse management plan and the horse population in Kosciuszko National Park has continued to grow. Rare alpine orchids, daisies and flowers like the Anemone buttercup remain under threat from grazing and trampling by horses.

The NSW Parliament has recently introduced electronic petitions; signing takes about a minute.

Enquiries to Linda Groom, Volunteer, Reclaim Kosci campaign, lindagroom@invasives.org.au



Anemone buttercup (*Anemoneus ranunculus*)



MELALEUCA DEANEI

This is a photo sent by Chris Cheetham of *Melaleuca deanei* flowering in Wollemi National Park.

Its status is listed as vulnerable.. It is named after Henry Deane who collected the type specimen in Lane Cove in December 1886. Studies have shown that this species seems to depend on fire to stimulate flowering and some species have not flowered for 10- 15 years!

Even after flowering seed production is low. Sometimes only 2% of a population at a site will produce seed. Plants resprout from epicormic shoots and suckering after fire. (Source of this information *Seldom Seen Rare Plants of Greater Sydney* by Alan Fairley).

There is a stand of *Meleuca deanei* at the end of Murray Park Rd in Kenthurst (*Ed.*)

**Australian Plant Society
Parramatta Hills Group**

apsparrahills@gmail.com

Secretary Jennifer Farrer 0407 456 577