

# CALGAROO

*A journey into nature*

November 2023



*Eucalyptus parramattensis* - Calgaroo

**Newsletter of the Parramatta and Hills District Group**

**Australian Plants Society NSW Ltd**

***Our vision: inspiring people to admire, grow and conserve native plants***

## WHAT'S ON IN 2023

- 4-5 November:** Sydney Edible Garden Trail. See page 3.
- 8 November Wednesday:** Propagation
- 25 November Saturday:** Members' meeting and end-of-year celebration  
Speaker Lyndal Thorburn: "*An Eremophila for every garden*"  
See page 2.
- 6 December Wednesday:** Propagation

*If you'd like to come to our propagation days at Bidjiwong Community Nursery and haven't been before, you can get details from Lesley Waite - phone 0438 628 483*

## AN EREMOPHILA FOR EVERY GARDEN

Meeting Saturday 25 November 2 pm to 4 pm.

The speaker at our meeting on 25 November at 2 pm will be Lyndal Thorburn, and her subject will be “An Eremophila for every garden”.

Lyndal is a life member of ANPS Canberra, a member of APS NSW South-East Region group, and has led the Eremophila Study Group since 2015. A scientist by training but not by profession, she has kept her interest in biology alive through long-term involvement with the APS Canberra propagation group, membership of APS Study Groups, and participation in many Citizen Science groups including iNaturalist, NatureMapr and Frog ID.

Shortly after moving to Canberra Lyndal was asked by Canberra Ornithologists' Group to join the Management Committee for Barren Grounds Nature Reserve, which at the time was being established as an Education Centre. She held this position for several years. She has since also been involved in the Queanbeyan River Corridor Management Committee and Queanbeyan Landcare. She and Tom now own a property on the South Coast and are enthusiastically focussed on the regeneration of its local flora.



*Eremophila youngii* (Brian Walters)

Lyndal's interest in Eremophila (Emu Bush) was kindled in 1985 when they first bought a pink *Eremophila maculata* 'Wendy' - a plant that is still alive in their Queanbeyan garden. She and Tom have since grown over 100 varieties in their rather shady garden, and they have been delighted to discover that many in the genus are frost-hardy and don't need sun all day. This garden is also the source of many Eremophilas that have been sold over the years at ANPS Canberra plant sales.

As leader of the Eremophila Study Group, Lyndal has instigated State-based sub-groups that have become active contributors to general knowledge about the genus and to the Study Group's research program, which now comprises three significant projects. The [Group's website](#) contains an image database of almost every species and many hybrids and cultivars. Study Group members are now contributing to the living collection at the Australian National Botanic Gardens and other botanic gardens in Victoria and South Australia through wild collections (under appropriate permits).

Lyndal will speak about the Eremophila genus, and the Study Group, and will also provide tips on propagation and care, particularly in the wetter Sydney region.

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*“The best time to take cuttings for propagation is **when you're there!**”*

- Ross Doig

## SYDNEY EDIBLE GARDEN TRAIL

On 4th and 5th November, more than 50 gardens across Sydney will be open for the Sydney Edible Garden Trail. There is a mix of private and community gardens. Two of the gardens are local and are looked after by people who are members of our APS group. They are:

**Community Environment Centre, Currie Avenue Annangrove. [Details here.](#)**

Open Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> only, 9am to 4pm.

The established demonstration vegetable garden at the Community Environment Centre includes some bush tucker plants. Adjacent to the vegetable garden is a demonstration native garden. Both gardens are lovingly maintained by volunteers. . . . and

**Kentridge Gardens, 132 Pitt Town Road Kenthurst. [Details here.](#)**

Open Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>, 9am to 4pm.

Kentridge Gardens is a private garden that includes large areas for vegetables, fruit trees, and roses, as well as plenty of native trees and shrubs and bush tucker plants.

Buy your tickets [here](#). All profits from the sale of tickets go to help school and community gardens.

## GREVILLEAS

I may grow on sandstone ridges,  
throughout deserts and on plains;  
I can tolerate the hottest sun,  
where soils are quick to drain.

I may grow in deep moist gullies,  
or on headlands where winds blow;  
I may grow on mountain ranges,  
and can tolerate deep snow.

My flowers are of many shapes,  
and their colours are diverse;  
My foliage is of many forms,  
when ripe my seeds disperse.

Some birds extract my nectar,  
while others crack my seed;  
My foliage offers shelter,  
for those who come to feed.

Proteaceae is my family,  
Grevillea is my name;  
I can offer so much pleasure,  
when you visit my domain!

- Malcolm W. Johnston



## **RIVER RED GUMS** are a refuge in our land of droughts and flooding rains

**Dr Catherine Cavallo**  
**Chief Operating Officer & Social Media**  
**Manager, *Remember The Wild***

Their roots reach down deep into the water table (usually > 10 m), drawing water to the surface that no other plants or animals can reach. By maximising their water use, they grow quickly and produce excesses of food in the form of leaves, nectar, pollen, wood, flowers and sap.

Sap-sucking, nectar-licking, leaf-grazing, wood-chewing and pollen-gathering invertebrates gather en masse, drawing insectivorous birds, mammals and reptiles to the feast. They are joined by nectar-feeding birds, bats and possums, and leaf-eaters too. At the top of the table sit the great predators - the monitors, snakes, raptors and owls. All gaining nutrients and water from this one tree.

Parasitising mistletoes tap into the tree's tissue and make use of the readily available water to grow palatable leaves, fruit and nectar that benefit even more wildlife.

Not only do they feed everyone, they keep them cool too! As the River Red Gum and the mistletoes pump water through their tissues, into their leaves and back out into the air, they cool and humidify their immediate surroundings, helping their community to survive through periods of dry heat.

A cooler microclimate forms in the soil under the shade of the River Red Gum's canopy, beneath a litter of red gum leaves that insulate and retain moisture in the soil and form the base of a subterranean food web. When rain does fall, the River Red Gum's boughs capture it and channel it down the trunk and into the soil around its roots.

And (as if food, water and climate control weren't enough) each tree provides homes for its visitors - under bark, in hollows and amidst the shelter of its spreading branches and roots. In floods, these spaces are vital for wildlife escaping the floodwaters, and provide a handy bed and breakfast for opportunistic waterbirds and other nomads to fly in and make use of. Give a nod of respect to a River Red Gum!

*The above article was published on Eucalypt Australia's Instagram page on 14 March 2023 and permission has been received from the author for it to appear here.*





# SYDNEY'S RAREST EUCALYPT HAS A NEW NAME!

*Eucalyptus sp. Cattai* becomes *Eucalyptus cryptica*

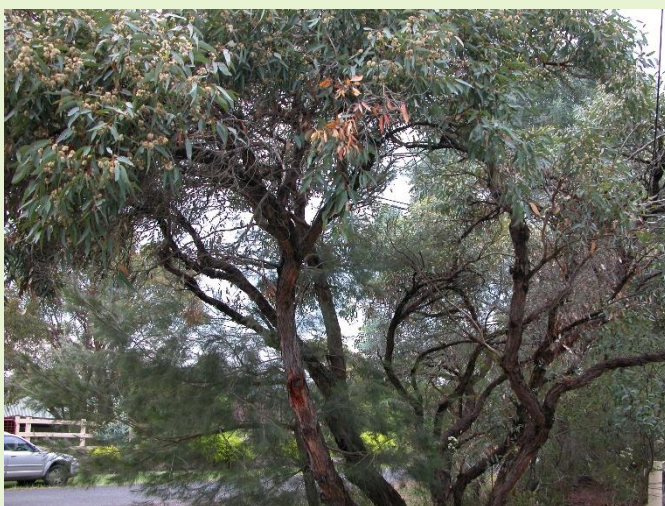
A scientific research report by a team of botanists led by Trevor Wilson of the Australian Botanic Garden, Mount Annan, was published in *Australian Systematic Botany* on 5 September 2023. **This report establishes without doubt that *Eucalyptus sp. Cattai* is a separate species, and gives it a new name: *Eucalyptus cryptica*.** You can read the full report [here](#).



The report mentions there are only approximately 700–800 individuals of this critically endangered tree existing in 14 known sites in water catchments within or in close proximity of Cattai Creek, spanning the suburbs (in a rough triangle) of Kellyville, Maraylya and Glenorie. Searches for the species in seemingly identical habitats in adjoining water catchments and local government areas have not detected any individuals.

‘No occurrences are known from formal conservation estates, some occur on unreserved Crown (State-owned) land, but most are present on freehold rural-residential and non-arable rural land and associated Council-managed roadsides. . . .the area where *E. cryptica* occurs is highly fragmented as a result of urbanization, and is threatened further by an intensification of urban expansion.’

The report continues: ‘Despite herbarium specimens being collected since 1967 and the populations being situated in the largest city in Australia, it has remained unclear to science whether it is a species or a collection of populations of hybrid origin.’ Amazing!



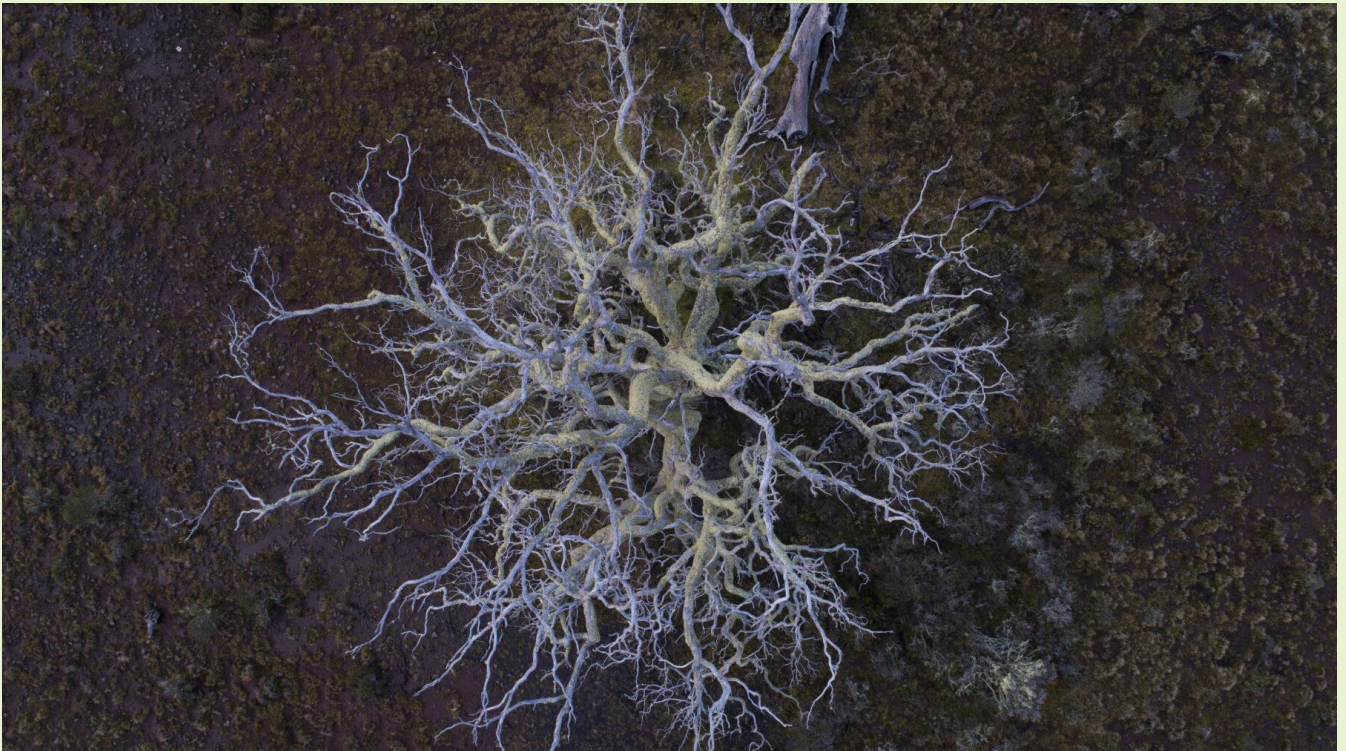
***Eucalyptus cryptica*. What a great name! ‘Cryptic’ means *mysterious, puzzling, ambiguous, having a secret or hidden meaning*. It certainly has puzzled botanists for many years.**





# CIDER GUM

*Eucalyptus gunnii subsp. divaricata*



**The bleached limbs of a dead Cider Gum reveal the intricate structure of the species.**

Republished with permission. Words Keely Jobe, photo Matthew Newton

One reason for the name is rather obvious. During the warmer months, the trees weep a sugary sap, and when the sap hits the yeasts in the air, or pools at the base of the tree, it begins to naturally ferment. This microbial event results in a lightly alcoholic sap that tastes like cider and smells like a brewery. You can catch that scent from quite a distance.

**The battle is on to save what's left of one of Tasmania's most endangered and intriguing eucalypts.**

The Cider Gum is a threatened species. There are only eight small stands currently known, in the Great Lake region of Tasmania near Mienna. They occupy in total just a few hundred hectares, and their numbers are in decline. The stands are remote from one another so genetically diverse fertilisation is increasingly unlikely, leading to a gradual decline in plant fitness.

To continue reading about the Cider Gum on the *Australian Geographic* website, click [here](#).

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***'It's been rumoured that there's birds and insects, native bees, pygmy possums, all sorts of native wildlife in [my beard]. But that's their habitat, and I let them be.'***

***Costa Georgiadis***



**At *The Duke* (hotel) at Round Corner, there's an electricity box between the footpath and carpark decorated with a wonderful mural of native flowers.**

**There's a nice native garden just behind the electricity box.**





## ***Maria – thank you so much!***

Maria Hitchcock has just published her last *Save our Flora* e-Bulletin, to go on to do other things.

Here's what she writes:

**Well, here we are with my last eBulletin.** This project was begun 10 years ago when I felt that gardeners were being sold lots of new 'youbeaut' cultivars, but there was no attempt to encourage them to grow our endangered species in their gardens. There are many wonderful gardeners all around Australia with fantastic skills who could really help with preserving our rare flora if only they were educated about which plants were endangered.

At the time, I was disheartened by the lack of any action by NSW APS in this area, so I set about to try to encourage those members who signed up to the online bulletin to think about adding some endangered plants to their gardens. Many were readily available in nurseries, they only needed to be identified. NSW has legislation in place to mandate that all plants on the EPBC list need to be tagged from the grower onwards. Unfortunately, that legislation is largely ignored by most nurseries, which means that the general public remains ignorant of which are our rare plants.

When I ran my online nursery, I was licensed to grow and sell endangered flora and made a feature of those plants by dedicating a whole category page to them. It was encouraging to see so many customers go straight to that page when selecting plants to buy. The public wants to do their bit for the environment but we have to make it easy for them. Over the years I have received many newsletters from native plant groups across Australia, some of which, especially the Queenslanders, are very active in growing and distributing their local flora.

**Unfortunately, the Australian Plants Society has a very weak national body,** whose only role is to run the Biennial Conferences and look after the ever-dwindling number of study groups. Over 30 years ago I advocated that the National body should have a real national presence so that the media goes to it when seeking comments regarding our flora. This was a great opportunity missed and now our Society is largely ignored and so fragmented that it can never speak with one voice.

Fortunately, there are other groups which have formed which now fulfil that role. The NSW Save Our Species program is going from strength to strength. In Victoria, Care for the Rare is doing a fine job. The Australian Network for Plant Conservation links people, research and action in plant conservation. Let's Celebrate! 27th March Earth Hour, 22nd April Earth Day, 5th June World Environment Day, 8th June World Oceans Day, 31st July National Tree Day, 1st September National Wattle Day, 7th September Threatened Species Day, 8-15th November Pollinator Week. There are many others.

As Climate Change continues to play havoc with the weather and habitats, groups of people are actively involved in monitoring, trialling, propagating and planting out in both in-situ and ex-situ locations. Here on the Northern Tablelands, we are in drought again. We have gone from a La Niña situation to an El Niño in a very short time catching a lot of us off guard. So far, I have noticed a very short flowering period which doesn't bode well for seed production. Water is scarce and limits will soon be introduced to town water supplies.



I would like to thank all the people who contributed over the years and who have been inspired to think about our endangered flora. Stay safe this summer and best wishes for the future!

I will also add all the 55 newsletters to the [website](#) in PDF form for you to access. Please feel free to copy articles for your own newsletters. No need to ask for my permission.

## Book Review: South Coast Ferns - a complete guide to the ferns and fern allies of the NSW South Coast

By Andrew Orme, Technical Officer, National Herbarium of NSW, Sydney.

**South Coast Ferns** has just been released by Dr Kevin Mills, and is a complete account of the ferns and fern allies of the NSW south coast, covering all known native and naturalised taxa that occur in the region.

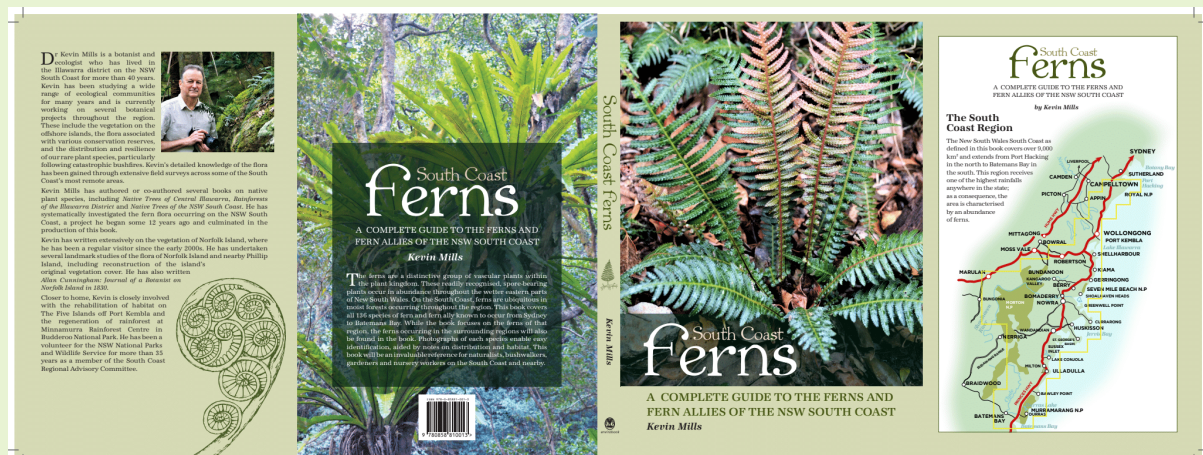
Dr Mills has produced a comprehensive catalogue of the Polypodiophyta (Pteridophyte) flora of the New South Wales South Coast, yet at the same time has also produced an exemplary field guide. The layout for each taxon provides the reader with the required information necessary for quick field identification, along with clear, detailed images of the habit and fertile fronds of each entity. Where applicable, synonymy is provided, which is particularly useful where there is debate on taxonomy. For each entity, there are distinguishing characters, occurrence status, etymology, and a distribution map based on Dr Mill's extensive field experience as well as herbarium specimen-based data.

This field guide will be an essential publication for all who are drawn in by the fern flora, from the experienced botanist to the amateur enthusiast, and not only for those on the south coast, as this publication will be a valuable reference for adjacent regions.

The layout, while beautifully illustrated, is also succinct and consistent, providing the perfect level of detail required for a field guide. The introduction and early chapters provide the reader with detailed information on the south coast environment, the varied habitats and fern distribution; an introduction to the biology of ferns; botanical nomenclature; a historical context that explores some early accounts of First Nation's uses through to early European experiences. The information on fern weeds and environmental concerns is also very welcome.

From first picking this field guide up, it is clear to me that it will provide the reader with an easy-to-access account of the fern flora of the NSW South Coast, which I am certain will remain a significant and essential regional field guide for all those interested in these wonderful plants for many years to come.

**Editor's note: Kevin spoke about ferns at our Group's end-of-year meeting in November 2022. His book may be ordered [here](#).**



## Growing Hoyas in pots

Ian Cox

I've been growing a *Hoya australis* in a concrete trough for several years, and each year in the warmer months it puts on a nice display of pink flowers over a long period.

Hoyas seem to like their roots restricted, and I haven't seen a need to repot it yet. I found that the medium should be well-drained and open, so I gave



it half pine bark and half potting mix. It gets a 9-month slow-release fertilizer each spring, and is placed in bright filtered light away from frosts.

My Hoya is supported by plastic stakes slightly more than a metre high, which it soon covered and made invisible. One thing to remember is that it flowers each year from the same stems, so it shouldn't be trimmed too much.

I've found it's easy to grow, needs little care, and has had no pests so far. It's also very easy to propagate from cuttings.



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## Attention plant killers: new research shows your plants could be silently screaming at you . . .

Alice Hayward, Molecular Biologist, The University of Queensland (from [The Conversation](#) 31 March 2023)

If you're like me, you've managed to kill even the hardiest of indoor plants (yes, despite a doctorate in plant biology). But imagine a world where your plants actually told you exactly when they needed watering. This thought, as it turns out, may not be so silly after all.

You might be familiar with the growing body of work that [provides evidence for](#) plants being able to sense sounds around them. Now, new research suggests they can also generate airborne sounds in response to stress (such as from drought, or being cut).



A team led by experts at Tel Aviv University has shown tomato and tobacco plants, among others, not only make sounds, but do so loudly enough for other creatures to hear. Their findings, [published today](#) in the journal Cell, are helping us tune into the rich acoustic world of plants – one that plays out all around us, yet never quite within human earshot.

### **Plants can listen, but now they can talk!**

Plants are “sessile” organisms. They can’t run away from stressors such as herbivores or drought. Instead, they’ve evolved complex biochemical responses and the ability to dynamically alter their growth (and regrow body parts) in response to environmental signals including light, gravity, temperature, touch, and volatile chemicals produced by surrounding organisms. These signals help them maximise their growth and reproductive success, prepare for and resist stress, and form mutually beneficial relationships with other organisms such as fungi and bacteria.

In 2019, [researchers showed](#) the buzzing of bees can cause plants to produce sweeter nectar. Others [have shown](#) white noise played to *Arabidopsis*, a flowering plant in the mustard family, can trigger a drought response. Now, a team led by Lilach Hadany, who also led the aforementioned bee-nectar study, has recorded airborne sounds produced by tomato and tobacco plants, and five other species (grapevine, henbit deadnettle, pincushion cactus, maize and wheat). These sounds were ultrasonic, in the range of 20-100 kilohertz, and therefore can’t be detected [by human ears](#).

### **Stressed plants chatter more**

To carry out their research, the team placed microphones 10cm from plant stems that were either exposed to drought (less than 5% soil moisture) or had been severed near the soil. They then compared the recorded sounds to those of unstressed plants, as well as empty pots, and found stressed plants emitted significantly more sounds than unstressed plants. In a cool addition to their paper, they also included a soundbite of a recording, downsampled to an audible range and sped up. The result is a distinguishable “pop” sound. The number of pops increased as drought stress increased (before starting to decline as the plant dried up). Moreover, the sounds could be detected from a distance of 3-5 metres – suggesting potential for long-range communication. To hear these sounds click [here](#).

### **But what actually causes these sounds?**

While this remains unconfirmed, the team’s findings suggest that “cavitation” may be at least partially responsible for the sounds. Cavitation is the process through which air bubbles expand and burst inside a plant’s water-conducting tissue, or “xylem”. This explanation makes sense if we consider that drought stress and cutting will both alter the water dynamics in a plant stem.

Regardless of the mechanism, it seems the sounds produced by stressed plants were informative. Using machine learning algorithms, the researchers could distinguish not only which species produced the sound, but also what type of stress it was suffering from. We now have the first research evidence that plants can make airborne sounds, heard up to a few metres away. It remains to be seen whether and how these sound signals might be involved in plant-to-plant communication or plant-to-environment communication.

The research has so far failed to detect any sounds from the woody stems of woody species (which includes many tree species), although they could detect sounds from non-woody parts of a grapevine (a woody species).

### **What could it mean for ecology, and us?**

It's tempting to speculate these airborne sounds could help plants communicate their stress more widely. Could this form of communication help plants, and perhaps wider ecosystems, adapt better to change? Or perhaps the sounds are used by other organisms to detect a plant's health status. Moths, for example, hear within the ultrasonic range and lay their eggs on leaves, as the researchers point out.

Then there's the question of whether such findings could help with future food production. The [global demand](#) for food will only rise. Tailoring water use to target individual plants or sections of the field making the most "noise" could help us more sustainably intensify production and minimise waste.

For me personally, if someone could give a microphone to my neglected veggie patch and have the notifications sent to my phone, that would be much appreciated!

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*This story is two years old, but I thought I'd include it in Calgaroo as it's still topical. Keith Muir, since retired, gave a great talk to our Group about the Gardens of Stone in 2019. It's one of my favourite places.*

*There's an article [here](#) about some of the plants of the Gardens of Stone.*

## **The Gardens of Stone**

The year was 1932, and the beginnings of the conservation movement were forming in the steep gullies and rocky outcrops of the Blue Mountains.

Myles Dunphy, bushwalker extraordinaire and Colong Foundation founder, was implementing a revolutionary vision. The vision was to make a series of detailed maps that delineated a proposed 'Greater Blue Mountains National Park'. In these maps, Myles marked a remote section of the country north of Lithgow that he believed needed protection for its unique natural values. This place was the Gardens of Stone.



*Myles Dunphy in the bush (1953).*

After almost nine decades of campaigning, Myles' 1932 vision for the Blue Mountains has been completed. The declaration by the NSW Premier in November 2021 put in place the last piece of the proposed 'Greater Blue Mountains National Park' that he envisaged 89 years ago.

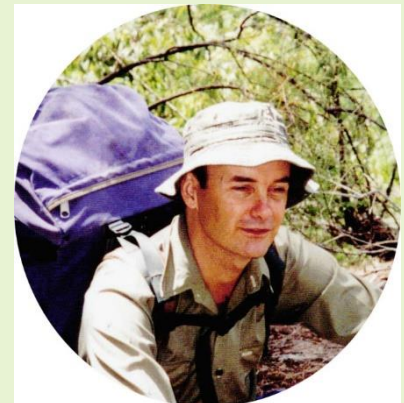


The new 28,000-hectare State Conservation Area covers the globally significant rock pagodas, canyons and endangered swaps of the Gardens of Stone region near Lithgow. The announcement has established a world-class tourism and conservation area, protecting at least 84 threatened plant and animal species. These values will now be enjoyed by thousands of people who visit Lithgow and the Gardens of Stone in years to come.



Today's success is a testament to the persistent community campaign by the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Lithgow Environment Group, Traditional Owners, and the Colong Foundation for Wilderness. It is only because of the decades of relentless campaigning, advocacy and support from people like yourself that this announcement has been possible.

*Colong Foundation's Haydn Washington taking former NSW Premier, Nick Greiner, into the Gardens of Stone (1985)*



With many thanks,  
Keith Muir, Colong Foundation for Wilderness (Now named Wilderness Australia)

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## Mistletoes, again . . .

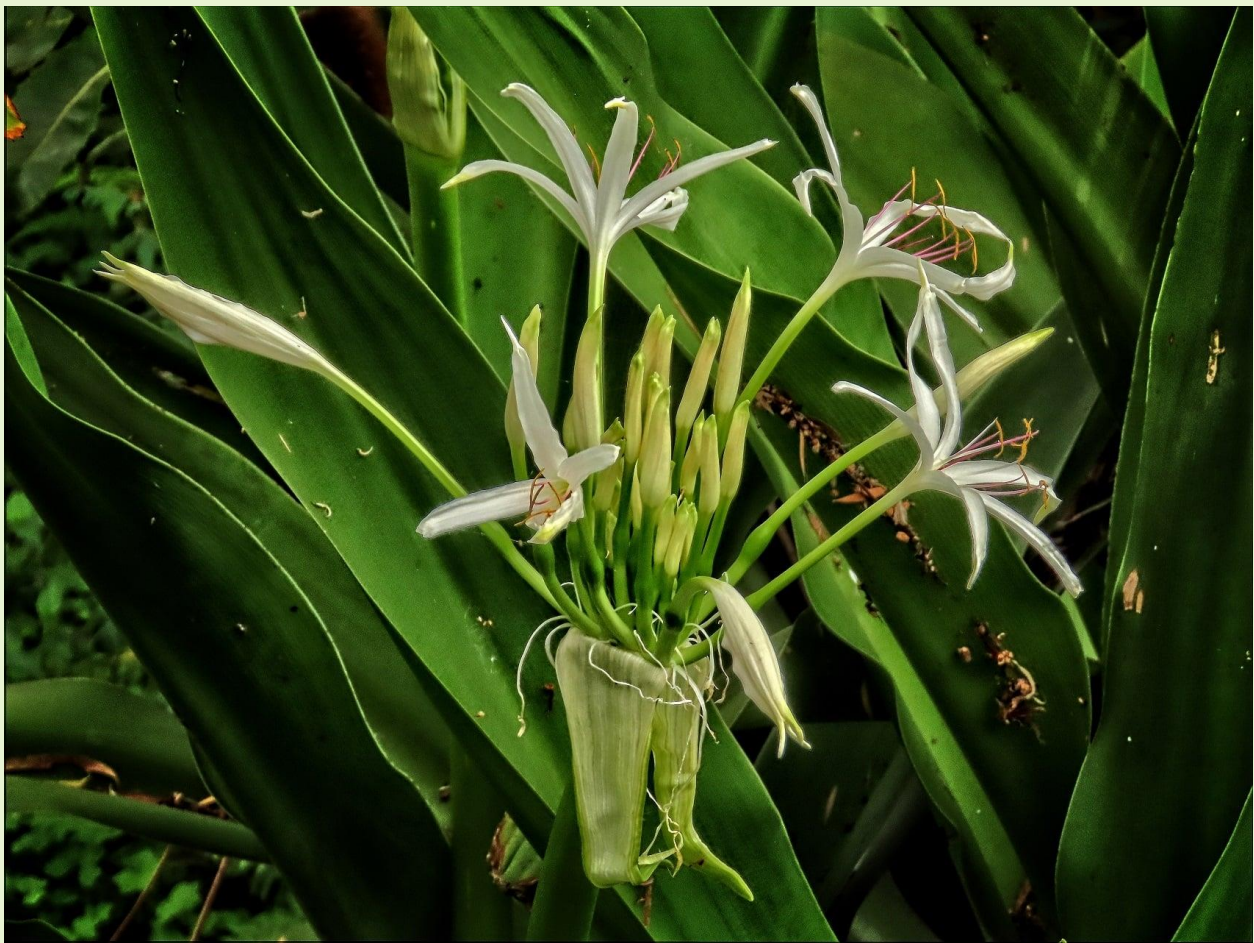
In the October 2023 Calgaroo, we featured two articles about Mistletoes - "*The Critically Endangered Regent Honeyeater and the Superhero Plant Saving the Day*" by Ricki Nash, and "*The Misunderstood Mistletoe*" by Lesley Waite.

**An online key for Australian Mistletoes has just been launched by Roger Fryer to assist in identifying them. You can access it [HERE](#).**





What's so funny??



Be careful, your head could explode if you laugh too much!

*Crinum pedunculatum* (Swamp Lily) – photos Bill de Belin



## Fred CATERSON Reserve, Castle Hill

*Here is our submission to The Hills Shire Council handed to Councillors at its meeting on the evening of 24 October 2023. It was written by Jennifer Farrer. Tony Maxwell and Linda Pine attended the meeting. At the meeting, Councillor Mila Kasby tabled a petition with over 16,000 signatures calling on Council to stop the clearing of 52,821m<sup>2</sup> of vital urban bushland, including hundreds of trees, in Fred CATERSON Reserve, and to hold its first public briefing on its Master Plan.*

The Australian Plants Society NSW Limited (APS NSW) is a community organisation with over 1,500 members across New South Wales, including a well-established Parramatta and Hills District Group which recently celebrated its 50th anniversary. We are part of an Australia-wide organisation with over 5,000 passionate members.

We agree with the opening sentence in the overview of the Fred CATERSON Reserve Masterplan: *“The Fred CATERSON Reserve is a unique and integral natural asset for the people of The Hills Shire.”*

It is understood that the site is struggling to meet demand as a sporting venue. However, we believe that this role should not be expanded at the expense of its natural values.

The bushland in Fred CATERSON Reserve is of particular significance not only to The Hills but also to New South Wales. The site is on part of the Castle Hill Reserve which was set aside for community use in 1861 when the remainder of the Castle Hill Government Farm was subdivided and granted to free settlers. (The Showground and Castle Hill Cemetery are also part of this reserve). This prevented the bushland from being cleared for agriculture and preserved it intact for future generations.

This foresight by previous generations means that Fred CATERSON Reserve contains vegetation communities that are now listed as critically endangered under the New South Wales Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016. The proposed rugby fields will require the clearing of two of these vegetation communities These are:-

### **1. Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest**

This ecological community is found on more fertile soils. For this reason, the Turpentine-Ironbark Forest of the Sydney Basin Bioregion has been selectively cleared for agriculture and urban development. It is estimated that only 4.5% of the forest present prior to 1750 now exists. Much of this is in small remnants under threat from further urban development.

### **2. Shale Sandstone Transition Forest**

This plant community occurs only in the Sydney Basin Bioregion on the edges of the Cumberland Plain. It is estimated that 22.6% of its original habitat remains.

One of the dominant trees of Shale Sandstone Transition Forest is the Hard Leaved Scribbly Gum *Eucalyptus sclerophylla*. This is one of the signature plants of Fred CATERSON Reserve. They are capable of growing into a 20m, straight-trunked tree with a huge girth. They are likely to live for over 200 years. These trees are valuable habitat for local wildlife.

Substantial habitat hollows form in old trees. Like other large gum trees, they host a huge population of insects and spiders, eating the leaves and each other, as well as the birds and bats that feed on them. Large quantities of nectar and pollen are available when they flower between January and April. The hard, fruits hold masses of seeds which are eaten by rosellas. The former Pony Club site has a large number of these trees, some of them very old.

As well as endangered vegetation communities the site is also home to several endangered and threatened flora and fauna species. Two pairs of Powerful Owls nest in the Reserve. The Dural Land Snail can be found on unpaved paths on damp evenings. There are more than 30 species of vulnerable and endangered plants growing in the reserve which include *Epacris purpurascens*, *Eucalyptus sp. cattai*, *Personia hirsuta*, *Acacia pubescens*, *Pimelea curviloba* and *Pultenaea scabra ssp biloba*.

It appears as though Council is only looking at the open space at Fred Caterson Reserve as a resource for further development. Its value to the community is far greater than this.

- It is a counterbalance to the “heat island” effect of our suburban development.
- It is a bushland recreation venue within easy reach of residents. The COVID pandemic has taught us how important it is to have local places for people to walk and destress.
- It is original bushland linking the present with pre-colonial times.

In the past Council has applied for and received substantial grants to manage weed invasion in the Reserve and to plant additional trees and other vegetation. The financial and human resources expended to achieve this will be a waste of time if the Reserve is overdeveloped.

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## ***Life in a Southern Forest***

One of the most interesting websites for me is [Life in a Southern Forest](#). I remember mentioning it in *Calgaroo* before - it's all about investigating and describing the plants, insects, birds and other animals found at Wonboyne on the far south coast of NSW by Paul and Kerri-Lee, both research biologists who live there. It's easy for me to while away half an hour or so, reading their many intriguing stories about nature and the world of plants and insects. And their photos are amazing. It's worth subscribing to their newsletter.

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## **VINEYARD CREEK BUSHWALK 28 October 2023**

**Jennifer Farrer**      Photos Jim Nash

Twelve members met at the Robert St entrance to the Vineyard Creek Reserve, which follows the Creek from Wesley St Telopea to Kissing Point Road Dundas. With the adjacent Oatlands Golf Course and Elizabeth Macarthur Park, it forms a significant wildlife corridor.

Vineyard Creek is named for the vineyard which was planted at the confluence of the creek and Parramatta River by Phillip Schaeffer in 1791. Schaeffer was a German national who had fought as a mercenary in the British Army He was sent out to help supervise the farming enterprise in the Sydney Settlement. However, his English was not up to the task, so Governor Phillip gave him a grant of land which he farmed very successfully.







The bushland reserve, like many reserves in Sydney, has survived because of the rough terrain, which was too steep for farming and later on for suburban development. One of our members, Jeff O'Neill has been active on the Vineyard Creek Catchment Reserve Committee for 50 years which has advocated for the preservation of the reserve, conducted bush care and planted indigenous species. We were fortunate that Jeff was able to come on this walk. Another one of our members, Jim Nash, grew up near Vineyard Creek and had many memories to share of the area.

The walk follows the creek at times along the bank where the challenge of keeping the weeds at bay is continuous but there were still ferns to enjoy. At other times the track is on higher ground through towering Blackbutts and Turpentines with a variety of understorey plants. Our route also included a detour to the dam which was formed to provide the water supply for the Oatland Golf Club. There is a stand of *Hibiscus heterophyllus* growing on the dam wall. On the edge of this track there was a sandstone outcrop, where we found several sandstone species to add to Tony's list.

We are the Parramatta and Hills Group of the Australian Plants Society but this is the first time we have walked in the Parramatta area for a long while. After this very enjoyable walk, I am sure we will be scheduling more in this part of Sydney. Thanks to Jeff for helping to plan the walk, to Jim Nash for his memories, and to Tony for preparing the prompt list of plants to look out for. We saw 54 species.



*Dodonaea triquetra*

## The APS Board has told us it will delete all *Calgaroo*s from our Group's website except for the current year's editions.

The reasons given are:

- lack of storage space.
- fear that people who say they're agents of the copyright holder will demand payment of money for copyright breaches in past newsletters. Apparently there's been a recent instance of this.

To me, neither of these "reasons" is valid or has any substance.

Our members now won't be able to access old *Calgaroo*s, even in the 'Members Only' section of our website. Really?? Our newsletters should be accessible to anyone. They should be sent far and wide, instead of being hidden!

This means that in January each year there'll be no newsletters on our website. Crazy!

We should be broadcasting the knowledge of native plants in our newsletter articles, rather than trying to suppress and hide it. This decision is not a great way to advertise our Society and what it's doing to promote and conserve native plants!

If you value *Calgaroo*, make sure you store it safely in your own digital system!

Sure, we must be careful not to infringe copyright, but **this decision seems very strange – and undemocratic.**

Ian Cox

## Share your stories . . .

Your contributions to *Calgaroo* are always welcome.

If you have interesting observations of plants in the garden or the bush, photos, or any other news, please send them to me at [itcox@bigpond.com](mailto:itcox@bigpond.com) for the next edition.

\* \* \* \* \*

*In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of our Country, the people of the Dharug Nation, whose cultures and customs have nurtured, and continue to nurture, this land since time immemorial. We honour and celebrate the spiritual, cultural and customary connections of Traditional Owners to Country and the biodiversity that forms part of that Country.*

\* \* \* \* \*





## **Parramatta and Hills District Group**

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