

# AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

*Southern Highlands Group*

*...your local native garden club*

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I feel like eating it, it looks so delicious. A hybrid of *Melaleuca liniariifolia*, probably 'Sea Foam.' Flowering around Xmas time in Bundanoon. The flower heads are fairly large at almost 4cms long, and pure white. This plant is part of a hedge, 3 metres high.

## Happy New Year and welcome back to APS Southern Highlands

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### The Next Diary Dates

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#### Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019 - “Botanical Art in Colonial Times” – Geoff Cains

Members’ meeting at the CWA rooms in Moss Vale. This building is situated in Elizabeth Street between the Fire Station and Wingecarribee Shire Council Chambers.

The art of botanical illustration extends from medieval times to the present. Whilst the importance of botanical images as a reference for medical benefits has diminished, the beauty of the images endures. Geoff Cains has prepared for us an overview of this special art form with the inclusion of Australian plants.



#### Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019 - Box Vale Mine Walking Track

*Meet 1.30 at Bowral swimming pool for carpooling or 2pm at the Track. Bundanoon members can liaise informally on carpooling or contact Trisha. When heading north through Welby take the first turn on the right after The Merchant of Welby Antiques crossing the highway. Search the internet for more detailed instructions and for inspiring information and photos on the Track.*

This fascinating walk follows an historic railway line [coal] through cuttings, along embankments and through a tunnel, to a lookout over a valley in the Nattai National Park. Glossy black cockatoos have been sighted in the *Casuarinas*. The walk is graded Easy, 3 hours return, well-marked and the same way back. There are plenty of places to stop with picnic tables in the middle and at both ends.

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## Provisional Program for 2019

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There are lots of exciting things planned by your committee. Please note the dates in your diary, and come along, perhaps bring a friend, to enjoy the talks and outings. And you may not be aware that any member is welcome to attend committee meetings.

**N.B. Planning this far ahead means that the odd detail may change but the dates will stay the same.** Your newsletter or emails will keep you posted on further details and any changes. Newsletters will be published mid-month: in January, March, May, July, September and November. Please feel free to share this newsletter with anyone who might be interested.

### Provisional Program for 2019

Date	General Meetings	Outings	Committee Meetings
<b>2019</b>	1st Thursday of the month at 2pm Feb. April, June, August, Oct, Nov. at the CWA rooms, Elizabeth Street, Moss Vale	1st Thursday in the month following the CWA General Meeting. 2pm unless otherwise advised	2nd Monday of month at 2pm
<b>Jan</b>			14th Jan Kay's
<b>Feb</b>	7th Feb Geoff Cains "Botanical Art in Colonial Times". See "Next Diary Dates" above.		11th Feb Sarah's
<b>Mar</b>		7th March Box Vale Track, Welby bush walk 2pm. Carpooling at Bowral swimming pool 1.30. See "Next Diary Dates" above.	11th Mar Trisha's
<b>April</b>	4th April Linda Groom, convener of Save Kosci - to confirm		8th April Kris's
<b>May</b>		2nd May outing to Goulburn Wetlands	13th May Erica's
<b>June</b>	6th June Geoff Goodfellow from Wingecarribee Shire Council to talk on frogs		Tuesday 11th June Bill's [long weekend]
<b>July</b>		4th July Burrawang coachwood rainforest garden visit to be confirmed	8th July Louise's
<b>Aug</b>	1st August Speaker on Fire Management, history, ecology and current practice - to be confirmed		12th August Kay's

Date	General Meetings	Outings	Committee Meetings
Sept		5th Sep Wattle walk at Mt Annan Botanical Gardens plus BBQ	9th Sep Sarah's
Oct	3rd October Louise Egerton talk on Birds of the Southern Highlands through the seasons		14th Oct Kris's
Nov	7th Nov Erica Rink on her W.A. wildflower trip		11th Nov Trisha's
Dec		Sunday 1st Dec Xmas at Sarah Cains	

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## APS Beyond the Southern Highlands

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On the APS NSW website <https://austplants.com.au/> you will find details of the **APS NSW Get-Together in the Newcastle area on the 17-18<sup>th</sup> August 2019**. To quote: *“There are a range of different native vegetation communities available to explore. Your visit will take you to some of the gems of the area and you will be able to see the spectacular coastal flora at its peak.*

*Highlights will include a visit to the Hunter Wetlands Centre where you will be welcomed to the Newcastle Groups home base, this will also include the opportunity to purchase from the wide range of native plants produced by the “Thursday Mob”.* <https://wetlands.org.au>

*A visit to the award-winning Hunter Region Botanic Gardens and herbarium is also on the agenda.* <https://huntergardens.org.au>

*There will be some gentle bushwalks included, these will feature some of the special places that can be found in the Newcastle area. There will also be an evening dinner to look forward to on the Saturday night.”*

You can follow this up on the NSW website. Look under the “Resources” heading at the top of the page, then at “Latest News.”

You might also be interested in the **National Conference to be held in Albany, Western Australia from Sunday 29th September to Friday October 4th 2019**.

Further details will be published on the website of the Australian umbrella group, Australian Native Plants Society [Australia] ANPSA, <http://anpsa.org.au>, as planning proceeds. You can register your interest now.

As you probably know, every two years ANPSA hosts a Conference and Seminar program featuring lectures, workshops and field trips highlighting the diversity of Australia's native flora. Associated with the Conference are Pre- and Post-Conference Tours which allow participants to experience the diversity of the local flora, and also to meet others who share your interests.

Planning is already underway for the following conference to be held in NSW, in Wollongong in September 2021. Our local APS plans to be involved in this as helpers.

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 Snippets
 

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## A Tale of Two Orchids

### Donkey Orchid in Leaver Park, Bundanoon – Sylvia David



*Purple Donkey Orchid*

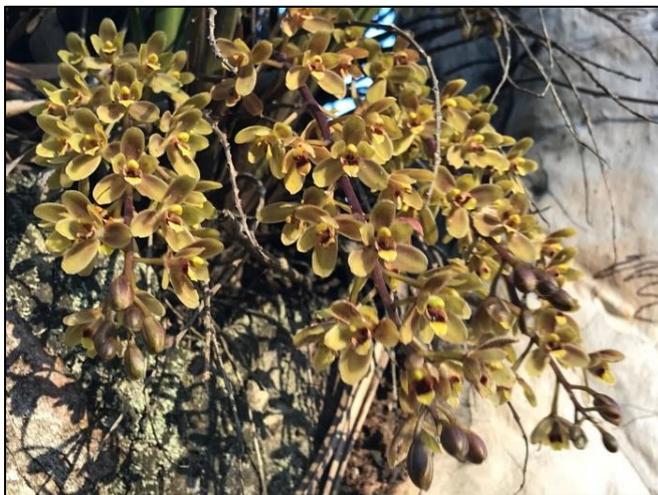
We sighted these in Leaver Park about 50 metres from the railway corridor. Neither Steve nor I have EVER seen this Purple Donkey Orchid (*Diuris punctata*) before.

*Editor's note: This exemplifies how important these still un-built-on village areas are, and how much we owe to the volunteers who battle with weeds to restore them. I plan to have a story on volunteers in a later issue.*

### Cymbidium Orchids in Morton National Park – Pamela Tippett

At a dinner in early December we were told about a native cymbidium in flower in Moreton National Park Bundanoon. We dropped everything and went to find it, knowing only that it was on the left hand side of the road going towards Echo Point after the turn off to Grand Canyon, just as the road curved to the left, growing on an old Scribbly gum about 5 metres from the road.... We did find it (and another nearby) looking beautiful in the late afternoon light.

The grand old tree had two forks, both colonised by beautiful plants in full flower. A treat to have such a lovely thing so easily accessible.



*Native Cymbidium orchid*



### Volunteers Needed for Robertson Nature Reserve

There is a fantastic program of ecological restoration initiated by Helen Tranter to remove weeds from the Reserve. Last year volunteers spent 110 hours weeding. Weed species treated were small-leaf privet, holly, ink weed, thistle and blackberry. Last September the Mt Gibraltar Landcare & Bushcare Group, which includes members of our group, added time and muscle to the cause.

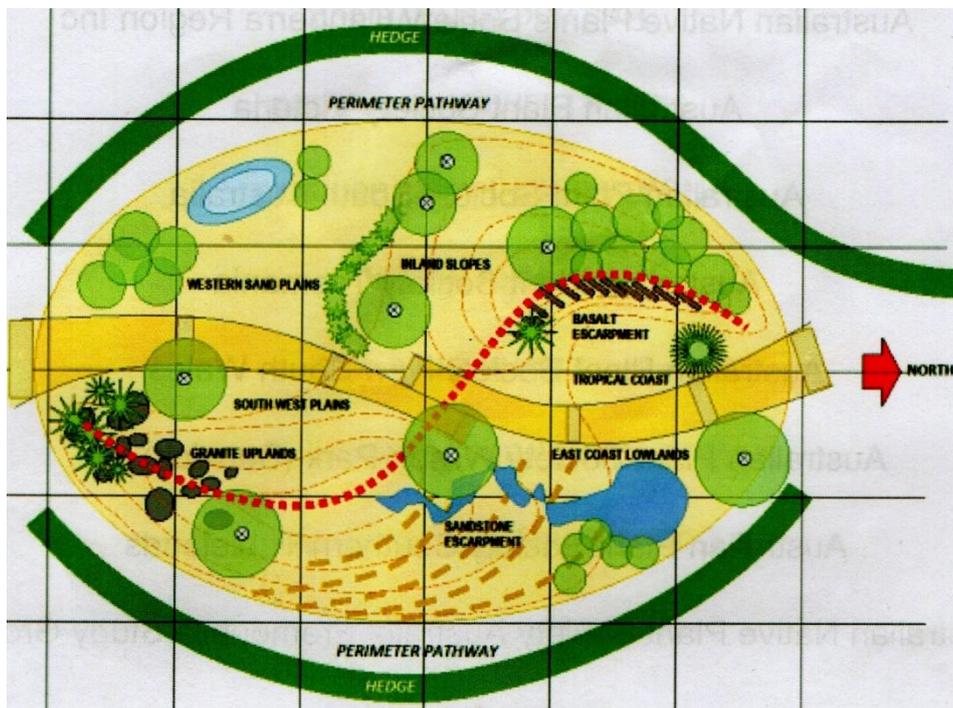
Their work is paying off. Throughout last year several areas started to regenerate with masses of native kangaroo apples establishing in disturbed areas and other native seedlings slowly following.

Obviously more help is needed. On the first Wednesday of the month from 9.15 to 12 pm. **CAN YOU HELP?** If so, please contact Jacqueline Devereaux, Ranger, [02] 4887 8244.

### Terra Australis in the National Arboretum, Canberra

Jane Lemann brought this to my attention. Terra Australis is one of a 'Gallery of Gardens' recently developed as a key area for functions, events and recreation on the Events Terrace at the National Arboretum, Canberra. Each small garden has a unique design with a variety of trees, plants and landscape features. The other gardens in the Gallery are the Children's Garden, Mununja the Butterfly Garden, AIDS Garden of Reflection, the Labyrinth Garden, Open Gardens Australia Celebration Garden, and the Gift of Life Garden.

The Terra Australis Garden was developed by ANPSA, the Australian Native Plants Society [Australia] and planned as a stylised representation of the geography of Australia and its diverse flora. A small donation was made towards it by our Southern Highlands group.



*Plan of Terra Australis garden*

The descriptive handout suggests the way to explore, and the meaning of, this ambitious garden. To quote *“First, follow the central or inland path along the landform which sweeps through the garden from the tropical north to the temperate south, to simulate the Great Dividing Range. On each side of the path the varied plant communities south from the columnar basalt geology of Cape York and along the Pacific east coast are displayed.*

*The path rises beside the sandstone formation to the lookout on top of the range. The path then traverses the western plains sloping down from the granite boulder uplands of the Snowy Mountains, Grampians and Tasmania. On the opposite side, the inland slopes and western sand plains extend south and west to the coast.*

*Be sure to complement the inland experience by following the coastal path around the garden perimeter to fully appreciate the beauty, natural diversity and unique colours of the Australian flora.” T.A.*

### Local Plantings Update

#### Coles Planter Boxes Bowral



*One of three planter boxes 24/1/2019*

Looking really good. You could be forgiven for thinking [since I didn't think to photograph the planter box itself] that this is a little native garden in miniature in someone's yard. Not plants enhancing a concrete box in a retail concrete precinct. It's good to let locals know how well Australian native plants can look.

#### Kangaloon/Boardman Roads Bowral Roundabout

Early days but it's coming on, and the *Lomandras* and *Rhagodia spinescens* are growing extra well. Some gaps and the *Westringias* are struggling. A remarkable result with the recent extremes of heat.



*Roundabout 24/1/2019*



*Roundabout detail 24/1/2019*

#### Garden at CWA Building Moss Vale

Work in progress, the delivery of sheep manure prior to planting is waiting on cooler weather.

## Food for Birds Query – Louise Egerton

*Can you help? Please contact Louise or the editor.* My birdie mates are complaining [late December/January] that there's not too much in their gardens to bring in the birds at the moment. The hot summer sun has sent them skedaddling for cover and there's nothing to eat.

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## Reflections From Our Former Editor

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### Sarah Cains



Becoming Editor of the Newsletter (NL) for the Southern Highlands District Group of the Australian Plants Society (SHAPS) presented me with the opportunity to expand my interest in the wondrous and diverse native plants of our district and to make many new friends along the way.

The job presented with the opportunity to visit members new and old and to talk about their gardens and local projects. In doing this, I benefited greatly from their knowledge and learned much from the wisdom and experience of our members. In addition, I became alert to the many magnificent local native plant specimens that, despite our district being a changed landscape in favour of exotics, are there to be found and admired by those who have an eye for the beauty and value of natives. I became quite a sleuth! Peering over fences, walking wherever possible and when driving, swerving my car off the roadway to view some treasure became a habit. And I learned never to venture out without a camera.

Writing has always been a favourite occupation of mine and working up stories required research that enriched my knowledge of new plants and refreshed my memory of 'old friends'. Keen to make sure that the NL was not my personal domain, (it belongs to us all!) I persuaded others to contribute and you will all attest to the skills and interesting viewpoints presented by what is now a committed and varied group of writers.

After six years, it was a pleasure to find a new 'voice' willing to take the NL forward. Trish Arbib is a skilled and thoughtful editor and is presenting us with reading to spark our curiosity and enrich our knowledge. An added benefit is that she comes from Bundanoon, and I live in Bowral. This ensures that we have a broad perspective on our large district.

Thank you again, Trish, for putting your hand up. Already we are enjoying reading your NLs.

I've heard it said that 'gardeners are always such nice people'. Shall we all take a bow?

Instead, perhaps we should say that people gathering around a common subject will find one another interesting because we are enthralled by our subject and want to discuss it - endlessly!

Some might call us boring. And I've had that experience - the rolled eye as we disappear head down, bottom up, to examine some tiny ground-hugging treasure, or dawdle far behind on a bush walk, determined to identify and exclaim over every plant along the wayside.

But we insiders know that we are not boring! It is always fun to talk, write and read about plants.

Finally, please be encouraged to support Trish by contributing to our NL. I know she will value your contributions as much as I did. Your plant stories at any level are always of interest to the group. There is always something we can learn from one another.

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## Wombat Care Bundanoon

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Fran Mullard



On Thursday 1st November 2018 our APS group enjoyed an informative and passionately delivered presentation by John Creighton, AKA Wombat Man, who talked to us about the important work carried out by volunteer carers at Wombat Care Bundanoon.

Wombat Care Bundanoon is an independent, self-funded volunteer group of dedicated carers focused on wildlife in general and wombats in particular. They are licensed to treat mange, which is the cause of the protracted and extremely painful deaths of many wombats, and work with the Wombat Protection Society Australia to deliver best practice care for the wombats living in our local area.

They are also active in area schools, mainly Bundanoon Primary, in providing education and awareness about wombats and local wildlife issues.

The wombats in our local area are from the family *Vombatus ursinus*, from the latin "ursus", meaning "bear". They are known as the Common Wombat or Bare-nosed Wombat. The Southern Hairy-nosed and the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombats are from a different family, *Lasiorhinus latifrons*, and are not found in our area.

Unfortunately habitat loss, competition for food from livestock and feral animals, shooting, poisoning, bull-doing of burrows, road deaths and mange present huge challenges for the Common Wombat. The two most pressing and obvious concerns are roadkill and mange.

We have all seen on the side of the road wombats who are injured or killed by cars. Often these animals have a viable "pinkie" or a joey in the pouch. Volunteers from Wombat Care rescue these babies and raise them where possible, preparing them for a soft, supported release back into the area from whence they came. The body of the parent wombat is tagged with paint to alert other rescuers that the pouch has been checked and the baby removed if applicable.

The raising and rehabilitation of wombats in captivity must be respectful of the need to produce resilient animals which are able to survive in the wild. Keeping them inside and feeding them on human food beyond the 5kg mark is setting them up for failure.

It generally takes about two years from pouch to release pen. During this time the wombats are affectionate towards their own humans, are gentle and connect with each other and are sometimes buddied up BUT they have special needs and truly do not make good pets! When they are ready to go they become more aggressive as if asking for release. In our area it is becoming harder to find places where they can be released safely away from people and cars.

Mange is a form of animal scabies caused by mite infestation. Introduced by Europeans and carried to the wombats by foxes, it is a major threat to wombat health. It causes incessant and injurious scratching by the animal creating painful lesions which become infected and eventually prove fatal. The infected animal displays "accordion fur", crusty ears and scabs in the eyes.

There is, however, a cure which works without the need to capture the wombat. The idea is to break the life cycle of the mite. A flap is made using the lid of an ice cream container which is hung with string over the entrance of the burrow. The medicinal dose is in a can attached to the flap and as the wombat leaves the burrow the treatment dose upends onto the wombat's back. Ingenious! Treatment lasts 15-20 days. Every 5 days the medicine needs to be replaced. Mange treatment kits are available, among other things, on the Rocklily Wombats website [www.rocklilywombats.com](http://www.rocklilywombats.com) and I believe there is a new single dose available or close.



*A low tech way of breaking the life cycle of the mite*

**Now for some interesting facts.** Did you know that wombats

- \*have poor vision and hearing
- \*have an incredible sense of smell ...a hundred times better than a beagle. They smell their way around
- \*do around 100 rectangular poos a day.....marking tracks
- \*have a backward-facing pouch with two teats
- \*usually have only one young at a time
- \*are the original "earth-movers", rotating as they dig to produce a beautiful, round tunnel
- \*have a tiny tail hidden by fur
- \*have a universal port called a "cloaca", as do all marsupials
- \*eat mainly native grasses, sedges, matt rushes, and tree and shrub roots
- \*can short-sprint at up to 40 k.p.h. if required
- \*maintain stable populations by emigration of immature animals or regulation to transient status pending the death of adults
- \* will fight, sometimes to the death, over territory
- \*are the koala's closest relative
- \*ARE EXTREMELY INTELLIGENT?

"Wombats are essentially, but not exclusively, solitary animals. Their simple grazing way of life might suggest that they do not require a particularly high intelligence. It is therefore of interest that the cerebral hemispheres of the Common Wombat are proportionately larger than any other marsupial and that those of his relative, the koala, are so poorly developed that they do not meet in the mid-line." \*\*

Not so common, really, eh?



I'm so lucky to have John to look after me

**References:** Rocklily Wombats Calendars 2018 and 2019

Notes from John Creighton's presentation

\*\*Australian Museum Complete Book of Mammals, edited by Ronald Strahan, Angus and Robertson

**For additional information:** John Creighton at Wombat Care Bundanoon 0490 659 245

Dianna and Warwick at [www.rocklilywombats.com](http://www.rocklilywombats.com)

*Follow up to John's talk: Response from attendees was very supportive, and a motion from the floor to provide a donation for the work that John and Wombat Care Bundanoon do was heartily endorsed. A cheque from APS Southern Highlands was presented to him at the Xmas lunch. Editor*

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## A Garden For All Seasons

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Robyn Kremer

Visiting the Sculpture Garden at the Australian National Gallery beside Lake Burley Griffin is a joy in all seasons. Since c1982, the randomly planted, white trunked *Eucalyptus mannifera* have grown to be majestic sentinels with open canopies that filter light to the indigenous plants below and moderate the prevailing winds.



*A dazzling display of prostrate Acacias and Hardenbergias*

Spring is a magical time when the mass flowering of *Acacias* and *Hardenbergias* along the paved diagonal access to the lakeside seating areas provides a dazzling contrast to the darker toned bronze sculptures.

Visiting In September this year, I was thrilled to discover *Acacia leprosa* beside a serpentine pathway leading to recently installed sculptures.

The large apricot blossoms were gorgeous & both specimens were impressively tall with long weeping branches. Hence the common name, Weeping Cinnamon Wattle.

I texted a photo to Jenny Simons who replied that it is difficult to cultivate and that her specimen and that of a friend had died after two years. With luck on another visit I shall be able to quiz a gardener and report his observations.

The winter garden enjoys a microclimate created by heat stored & reradiated from the massive north facing, bush-hammered concrete walls of the Gallery and grey slate paving. Cold winds are excluded resulting in winter flowering of *Philothecas*, *Indigofera australis*, *Croweas*, and *Grevilleas*.



*Apricot blossoms of Acacia leprosa*



*Orangutan Foot by Lisa Roet*

Several sun-drenched benches encourage quiet reflection of monumental sculptures by French masters. Nowhere else in the world are Auguste Rodin's *The Burghers of Calais* displayed against a backdrop of Australian plants.

Enjoying a picnic lunch while contemplating thought provoking sculptures is a simple pleasure. A striking sculpture, looking even more massive against the flowering wattles is the *Orangutan Foot*.

For two hours each day, FOG, installed in 1976 by Fujiko Nakaya mists the garden ameliorating & animating the environment in a uniquely beautiful way.

In summer the *Casuarinas* and aquatic plants around the spring fed pond provide welcome shade. Imaginative placement of sculptures in water, on mounds or nestled amongst the tree trunks results in an ever changing play of light and multi-sensory delight.

Landscape architect, Harry Howard drew an asymmetrical plan to complement the dynamic architecture of the NGA. He used exclusively Canberra region Indigenous plants to create a distinctive setting for the National Outdoor Sculpture collection.

His stated aim was to create physical & psychological comfort which is absent in other areas of the parliamentary triangle. I never tire of visiting this enchanting garden which encourages quiet contemplation after a stimulating visit to the National Gallery of Australia.

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## Bush Medicine

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### Danielle Spinks

*Following on from the short piece on Aunty Wendy's smoking ceremony at the Bundanoon railway celebrations in the September issue, I contacted Danielle about a workshop run by Aunty Wendy on bush medicine. Here is an extract from Danielle's report. There is much more in her report, on food, drink, stings, sanitation, fire... For full report see [www.daniellespinks.com/bush-medicine/](http://www.daniellespinks.com/bush-medicine/)*

I recently went to a workshop in Bush Medicine that was run as part of Bundanoon's 2018 Winterfest programme. Held in a sunny room at the local CWA, a group of about 9 adults and kids

got to touch, smell, crackle and rub our way through an interactive two hours about fascinating local treasures. All of my information comes from Aunty Wendy Lotter of Platypus Dreamin Aboriginal Cultural Programs and Bushwalks.

Bundanoon is Gundungurra Country. Because Australia is vast and ecologically diverse, the plants used for bush medicine in one area may not be the same as another. This information really only relates to the native plants that grow in Bundanoon and surrounding areas.

**Antiseptic:** Tea tree is great for helping stop infection. Place a wad beneath a paperbark bandage and tie it on with a blade of kangaroo grass.

**Hair:** If you need to brush your hair, the small and soft hairpin banksia will leave you with neater locks and a lustrous shine. And the red and purple banksia seeds can be crushed, made into a paste, smeared over the head to kill head lice.

**Anxiety:** Get a few nostrils full of tea tree fragrance. It will calm you down as well as being a good antiseptic.

**Cold and flu:** Do this in sequence: Tear a few leaves of the blue gum (aka Argyle Apple, *Eucalyptus cinerea*). Inhale. Ah!

Next, do the same with a few leaves of kangaroo mint (aka native mint). Inhale. Again. Again.



*Blue gum, kangaroo mint, lemon-scented tea tree. Photo Yvonne Crofts.*

Mmm-mm. Mix them into a potpourri with the blue gum. The job of the kangaroo mint is to clear the chest and sinuses and headache. It also sharpens the senses.

Now, grab some delightful lemon-scented tea tree. I love this stuff. Add that to your hand. Breathe. Ahhh.

Last, do this step separately. Discard the other leaves first. Take a bunch of leaves from *Melaleuca hypericifolia*. This is the one with small orange and red flowers. Crush the leaves in your palm and breathe in. This will help move all those effects from the other

aromas through your body.

**MANY THANKS** to all contributors to this January newsletter: Sarah Cains, Fran Mullard, Robyn Kremer, Danielle Spinks, Pamela Tippet, Louise Egerton and Sylvia David.

**I'd love to hear from any members with stories to tell, snippets to share, books to review....** I'm a great believer in two way communication. There is so much knowledge in our membership. Let's share it as much as possible.