

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

Southern Highlands Group

...your local native garden club

President

Kris Gow

krislloyd2@bigpond.com

Vice President and Guest Editor

Trisha Arbib

trisharbib@gmail.com

Secretary

Kay Fintan

kaynbrian@bigpond.com

Treasurer

Bill Mullard

bfmullard@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Sarah Cains

sfcains@gmail.com

Communications

Erica Rink

ear2703@icloud.com

Committee Member

Louise Egerton

legerton@swiftdsl.com.au



There are masses of these *Isopogon anethifolius* [Drumsticks] near Echo Point in the Bundanoon section of Morton National Park. Later in the spring their yellow flowers will stand out and contrast with the dainty pink boronia flowers. But in early spring their leaves add a welcome splash of red, presumably from the cold, or it could just be the young growth, to the bush. The name *Isopogon* means equal-bearded, referring to the hairy fruits.

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Diary Dates

Thursday October 4th General meeting with speaker, Bush Care Officer, Jennifer Slattery

Monday October 15th Committee meeting at Kris Gow's

Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th October Bundanoon Garden Ramble. See www.bundanoongardenramble.org.au
More helpers would be appreciated to help with our plant stall in garden 8 which combines native and exotic plants. There will be a roster sheet at our October meeting.

Thursday November 1st AGM with speaker – wombat rescuer/carer, John Creighton

Monday November 19th Committee meeting at Louise Egerton's

Sunday December 2nd Christmas Gathering



News from your committee

Trisha Arbib is pleased to be **guest editor** of this issue, and give Sarah a chance to finish building her house. I have kept the layout much as Sarah has it, but have added a few more south of the shire [Bundanoon] items. I'm putting my name forward to take over as editor at the next AGM.

I'm really thrilled that our group is getting out into the community and in small ways changing the landscape by planting more Australian native plants in the shire and hopefully into residents' mindset. T.A.

Some more subtle planting, of *Chrysocephalums*, has taken place at the **Cole's planter boxes**. Check it out, and you may want to talk to Sarah or Kris about helping with watering. Signage is planned with laminated flyers on sticks when the plants are bigger.

Early 2018 the committee decided to approach council requesting our group sponsor the **roundabout at the intersection of Kangaloon Road and Boardman Road, East Bowral** with native plants.

The idea was met with enthusiasm by WSC and after an informal meeting we were advised the plants could not be higher than 40cm, no grasses and maintenance staff could walk between the plants.

Sarah Cains created a design with four "pie" wedges and a wavy strip in a cross pattern through the centre. The species would be exposed to extremes of heat/ cold, winds and frosts. After much discussion and plant choice limitations the four wedge plantings would be grey foliage *Rhagodia spinescens*; dull grey-green leaf *Westringia* "Smokie"; dark green leaf *Grevillea lanigera* 'Mt Tamboritha'; lemon flowered *Correa reflexa* var. *nummularifolia*. The cross wave would be *Lomandra* sp.

Bill Mullard with great patience produced plan Mark VI and submitted it to council. It was received without council making any alterations. Most plants were purchased as tube stock and potted on. This was to harden them off and reduce costs. Council staff has recently done the planting. K.G.

The four large conifers and the rest of the exotic shrubs have been removed from the **garden** at the **CWA meeting rooms** where we meet in Moss Vale. Their plan was to replace them with natives. We have recommended a simple low maintenance plan for the area, mostly in front of the building and along Donkin Street.

Suggested plants are pink and purple *Callistemons*, *Philothecas*, *Grevillea rhyolitica* [Deua grevillea], 3 *Eucalyptus gregsoniana*, with an understory of *Lomandras*, broad leafed *Myoporum parvifolia* and *Correa reflexa* var. *nummulariifolia*. And a herb garden at the back.

We are donating the eucalypts, which will look fabulous planted in the front left hand corner as you face the building. The CWA are happy with the plan but have gone for a few alternatives because of availability. They have accepted an offer to assist with spring time planting, date to be decided. Please let any of the committee know if you wish to help. Please contact Bill for more details.

Snippets

Proposed Sutton Forest Sand quarry

On 31 July the NSW Department of Planning & Environment called a public meeting about the proposed Sutton Forest Sand Quarry. Rugged up on a cold wintery night, 300 locals turned up to learn more about the proposed project and voice their concerns. The massive project involves clearing 63 ha of native bushland, part of which make up the Great Western Wildlife Corridor.

For information, see:

http://www.majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=6334

This is a mega project that will create a 47 hectare pit going almost 40 metres down below the water table into the aquifer. It is located in the narrowest part of the Great Western Habitat Corridor, linking the Blue Mountains wilderness with Morton National Park. The site is in close proximity to the "hanging swamps" that are federally listed as an endangered ecological community. These swamps with their unique flora and fauna will be impacted by the massive draw down of water from the pit.

A Botanical Quest



Pimelea physodes

While wandering from the Mt Annan Botanic Gardens Shop to the adjacent car park my friends and I all stopped, in amazement, at a beautiful bush. Amazement because although we thought it was probably a native, none of us had ever seen anything like it.

The flowers were large, abundant and showy and bore a superficial, half-asleep resemblance to those of hellebores.

I emailed our committee to see if anyone knew what it was. Our horticulturally-savvy Newsletter Editor, Sarah Cains, was back in a flash: *Pimelea physodes* or Qualup Bell from the sandy heaths or rocky slopes of southern Western Australia. The petals are in fact bracts. It is said to be hard to cultivate outside of its known distribution...but not impossible, especially if grafted. My quest now is to try my luck...but where can I source such a plant? Can anyone help? **Louise Egerton**

More about *Eucalyptus macarthurii*

Jane Lemann follows on from Sarah Cain's report in our July 2018 issue.

These trees are naturally found in the Wingecarribee River valley. Now there are few, as they were cut for eucalyptus oil distilleries. You may have noticed the different smell of the leaves, it is almost like a geranium, not what we think of as eucalyptus. The oil was coveted and used for the perfume industry.

At one time there was a distillery on the Billy Billy Flat. This is the low area between the Glenquarry Cut and Kiaora Lane off the Kangaloon Road beside what was then the Wingecarribee Swamp - now the Reservoir.

Our property is beside the reservoir too and we have quite a few of the trees popping up by themselves in their own territory. We love them because they are very deep rooted trees and seem to be able to stand up to the howling winds. However, they always look a bit of a mess because just about everything likes to eat the leaves. Great habitat! J.L.

Smoking Ceremony



Aunty Wendy Lotter

Bundanoon recently celebrated 150 years of the railway. Before the speeches all watched with interest as Aunty Wendy Lotter made an Acknowledgement of Country followed by a short version of the traditional Aboriginal smoking ceremony.

She burnt a mixture of native bush medicine leaves which produced a vigorous fragrant smoke. Leaves were a mixture of blue gum, scribbly gum, tea tree and lemon scented tea tree and something she called soap plant [perhaps black wattle]. Aunty Wendy explained that aborigines don't use botanical names, it's an aboriginal partnership with the bush.

The official guests smeared white ochre on their foreheads before passing through the smoke. This is so that the ancestors can see them. They turn around and breathe in and ask for guidance on what they want. The smoke is for changing your life and achieving your wishes. T.A.

12th Australasian Plant Conservation Conference

'Moving house – a new age for plant translocation and restoration.'

If you're interested it will be on at the CSIRO Discovery Centre Canberra on 12 – 16 November 2018. You'd need to register.

www.anpc.asn.au/conferences/2018

An interesting website

You might be interested in the relatively new newsletter 'Beating around the bush' (<https://theconversation.com/welcome-to-beating-around-the-bush-wherein-we-yell-about-plants-96993>) from The Conversation.

The Conversation (<http://theconversation.com/au>) is a set of online newsletters, covering general politics etc. and also specific fields such as health. 'Beating around the bush' is a special section that focuses on Australian plants.

For the Love of Plants – A Botanical Art show

The show will be a Florilegium of threatened species of Wingecarribee Shire. The dates are 19th to 30th October at the Bowral Art Gallery, 10am to 4 pm daily.

It is being opened by Lauren Hook, Threatened Species Specialist from the Office of Environment and Heritage, on Saturday 20th, 4.30pm with a glass of wine etc.

The contacts are bdasbotanicartists17@gmail.com, or Rosie Wade 0244215949, or Jane Pye, 0248623750.

Report on Pat Hall's talk on Glossy Black cockatoos, and more, 2nd August

Sarah Cains

Many members have come to SHAPS through an interest in native birdlife, seeking to learn about growing the native plants that will house and feed the birds, so it was no surprise that twenty-eight people filled our little CWA hall to hear our August speaker, Pat Hall, tell us about the endangered Glossy Black Cockatoo (GBC).

Pat worked for National Parks since the 1960s and though she retired in 2012, she returned to that workplace as a volunteer in order to share her great experience and knowledge.

In 2015 she was approached by Bundanoon Community Association because members were seeking a project to support a threatened species. The Glossy Black was chosen. It was also the 150th birthday of Bundanoon.



At 35/40 cms, the GBC is the smallest of the parrots. It is black with a broad, red tail band and grey legs. The female has some yellow markings. It has a large, bulbous bill and makes a soft, gentle call. The birds can be heard in the trees with the soft cracking sound they make when opening seed pods in search of seeds. Surprisingly, as their bills are large, the seed they seek is tiny, but after they crack open the pods, they lick out the seed very efficiently.

In relatively recent years the GBC was abundant in our local area but loss of habitat, and in particular, the loss of its preferred feed tree, *Allocasuarina littoralis* (the Black She-oak) has seen numbers plummet in recent years.

A. littoralis is a fast growing tree with the male and female parts develop on the one tree. It has many uses additional to feeding the GBC. These include soil stabilization, pollen production (insects) hardwood for building and firewood and also, the roots fix nitrogen in soils. The 'needles' suppress weed growth where they build up beneath the trees.

Whilst the GBC will feed on other species of tree, it will travel miles to find this particular tree. The tree is a hardy, fast grower with a large root system. It doesn't like its root system to be wet for prolonged periods.

Human activity has caused massive loss of habitat for the GBC as, being large birds, they need large holes for nest sites and these are only to be found in trees around 150 years old. There is lots of competition for any such holes. Many such trees have been cleared and this has resulted in numbers of the GBC diminishing at an alarming rate. Reproduction is slow, with the female laying only one egg every two years and fledglings remaining dependent for a long time.

The Bundanoon rescue project was launched in November 2016 with the aims of generally encouraging people to plant natives, and in particular, to increase the numbers of the GBC. Planting the preferred feed tree (*Allocasuarina littoralis*) was seen as a good place to start.

Seed was collected in the Bungonia forest and at first, Wariapendi Nursery grew the trees on to planting size. Later this task was undertaken by Lloyd, at the Menai Recycling Centre. The growing plan has gone from strength to strength and Lloyd has proven to be a great friend to the project. So far 4,700 trees have been handed out for planting with an additional 3000 going out this September. Pat says, "We will keep going while the demand is there."

The project has been awarded a Community Science grant of \$111,000.00 (this appears to be largely due to Pat's efforts) and the money will be used to further the project.

As a result of the success of the project and Government Funding, the Great Western Wildlife Corridor has been established to increase protection of the only remaining vegetated habitat corridor between Morton National Park and the Southern Blue Mountains.

Project to acknowledge the first Children's Home

After telling us about the GBC, Pat showed us two short films of other projects in which she has been involved. The first film told of a project to acknowledge the first Children's Home established in Bomaderry in 1898 to house Aboriginal children taken from their families – the start of the 'Stolen Generation'.



Giant mosaic depicting images of the past and the future

In cooperation with local Aboriginal Elders and students from Shoalhaven High School, a wonderful mosaic was created in the shape of a snake depicting images of the past and the future, working towards reconciliation and ensuring this never happens again. It has been a great success attracting visitors and providing a teaching resource for students.

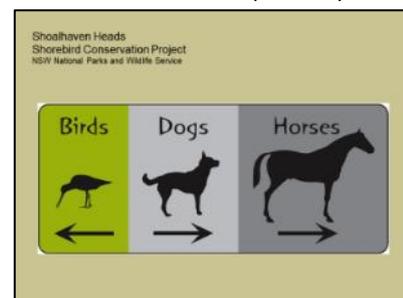
Shoalhaven Heads Shorebird Conservation Project

This was the subject of Pat's second film. Shoalhaven Heads is a major site for birds migrating from the Northern Hemisphere and the area was suffering from invasion by dogs, horses and motorbikes. Excessive signage in the area was crude and ineffectual and the area gave a message of being of no value.

As is easy to imagine, agreement on the uses of the area took some careful negotiating! Rather than attempting to ban dog owners, equestrians and motor bike riders, the project managers achieved an end result with areas sectioned and separated to accommodate these activities whilst preserving plenty of uninterrupted space for the birds.

Quirky signage, art works and the inclusion of community members and local primary schools, has resulted in a win for both the birds and the locals.

Many thanks for coming to talk to us, Pat. We found your talk interesting and your work inspirational.



Eucalypts in Sicily

Robyn Kremer

When Australian war correspondent, Alan Moorehead ascended the steep slopes of Taormina in 1944, he was hot on the heels of the retreating German forces and after a good story.

He found an historic Sicilian hilltop town that had seen many invaders including the Greeks & Romans who had left a famous amphitheatre.



Eucalypts on steep cliffs at Taormina

Droves of tourists fill Taormina's narrow streets during the warmer months and a few of them might notice how luxuriantly eucalypts are growing on the steep cliffs below the city walls.

I wonder who thought to seed those cliffs in recent decades.

These eucalypts have thrived, though many have been crudely pruned to safeguard views of the sea. Predictably they have shot with renewed vigour a host of branches and will soon need another haircut.

I wonder if Sicilian emigrants returning for family reunions carried those seeds from their adopted country and planted them.

The path from the train station by the beach to the hilltop village has probably been used by pedestrians & mules for millennia. Maybe Eucalyptus seeds will be distributed by wind & rain and gradually revegetate a barren hillside. I hope so.

At Milazzo on the north coast of Sicily we strolled the foreshore prior to taking the ferry to Salina in the Aeolian Islands. A row of eucalypts had really been brutalized when a shady canopy would have been welcome.

Unlike the other Aeolian Islands, Salina has natural springs and eucalypts were thriving in cloud forests and on steep seaside cliffs. We couldn't identify the narrow leaved varieties however they were so much more attractive than the prickly pear that was uncontrolled and a real hazard along rocky paths.



Eucalypts brutalized on the seafront at Milazzo

I wondered if cactoblastis moth could become as useful an export to Sicily as Eucalypts.

Eucalyptus honey was on sale which was an indication that the bees appreciate the flowers when the trees are allowed to grow naturally.

Wattle Day Celebration September 1st

Trisha Arbib

Friends of Morton National Park, Bundanoon held a celebration of Wattle Day for the first time, in the Park at Gambell's Rest. It was a meeting of a small group of convivial like-minded people, drawn from bird and garden groups, bush care, bush walkers, and yes the APS. Sylvia David from our local group was resplendent in a hat decorated with golden pompoms that she had made.



Illustration by Matthew Martin, published in Spectrum in the Sydney Morning Herald. With his permission.



3D effect of golden wattle in Morton National Park

The highlight for me was a bush walk on the Erith Coal Mine track, led by the incredibly knowledgeable Steve Douglas. He not only identified plants but told us interesting details.

More than half a dozen wattles were in flower. The sunshine wattle, *Acacia terminalis* is an early flowerer. Swamp wattle, *Acacia elongata* is known for handling clay and basalt well. Some wattles showed evidence of galls and borers and holes leaking sap. Steve told us that cockatoos can break off thick branches and even sizeable stems of plants.

A favourite with all of us for some reason was *Prickly Moses*, *Acacia ulicifolia* with its prickles and pale yellow ball flowers. Perhaps it's the name, or that it's easy to identify! The prickles make it drought hardy and deters animals and birds, although parrots eat the fruit as it hangs clear.

Acacia obtusifolia is hard to distinguish from *A. longifolia* except the point of its leaf is curved. Flowering time is not always an indicator. And *Acacia suaveolens* has distinctive blueish waxy leaves, which are a defense against drought, and fat seed pods.

It wasn't all wattles. I was very pleased to have identified some plants I'd seen in the Park the week before. The narrow red bells of *Styphelia tubiflora*, and small white flowers of *Leucopogon fletcheri* ssp. *brevicephalus*, white beard. You had to look closely to see the beard within the flower.

On returning to Gambell's Rest we were invited to recite a wattle poem, even sing a song, with the reward of a free plant. The Park was beautiful with drifts of wattle receding far into the distance giving a gorgeous three dimensional effect.

The plan is to make this an annual event. One outcome will be the formation of a local field naturalists' group which will meet regularly for bush walks, native fauna sightings...

**Apologies to Steve if my notes scribbled on the walk are at all inaccurate.*

 Outing to Caves Creek, APS 6th September 2018

Jane Pye

There had been rain after a long dry spell, and the forecast wasn't good for our outing to Caves Creek. Nevertheless about 12 people met at the carpark and set off for an area new to many. The walk is about 4 km, winding through Sydney Sandstone woodland then dropping down into damp dense rainforest and two caves usually with a creek running through. The last part is along the side of a vertical rock wall and arrives at a pool encircled by sandstone cliffs. It was lovely, and we saw plants to match.

Firstly a greyish pink grevillea, *G. buxifolia*: leaves narrow, <2cm long, flowers in clusters not 'claws'. *Lomandra obliqua*, pointed out by Pam, looked like a fern, about 15cm with twisty branched leaves all up the stem. A grove or two of *Leptomeria acida*, showing tiny buds.

*Leucopogon sp.*

Prickly *Leucopogons* of different sorts, some in full flower; a *Stylidium*, possibly *laricifolia*, a bright pink *Boronia polygalifolia*, several *Grevillea arenaria*. Wattles, *Hovea*, *Hardenbergias* all in flower; a *Lasiopetalum ferrugineum*.

*Boronia polygalifolia**Lasiopetalum ferrugineum**Xanthosa pilosa*

We also saw a waratah, some *Lomatias*, a *Dracophyllum secundum* in bud growing from the cliff face, and some small hairy *Xanthosa pilosa* looking winter-battered.

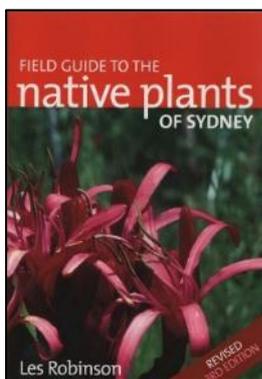
We identified *Eucalyptus punctata*, bloodwoods without flowers, and scribbly gums. *Banksias* included *serrata* and *ericifolia*. The rain was just enough to make the path a bit slippery, but not enough to fill the creek or to make the plants thrive...some looked very parched. All in all it was a most satisfactory afternoon.

Book Review: Les Robinson, Field guide to the native plants of Sydney, and Alan Fairley & Philip Moore, Native plants of the Sydney Region

Trisha Arbib

It's interesting to compare two well known field guides, both revised 3rd editions. Although their titles refer to the Sydney region they are both useful for identifying plants in the Southern Highlands.

There are some obvious differences in look and presentation [see below] but they both cover details of range and habitat, size of plants and details of flowers, leaves and fruit. Both have fairly technical detail, using words like rhombic leaflets, glabrous elliptical leaves and stout peduncles.

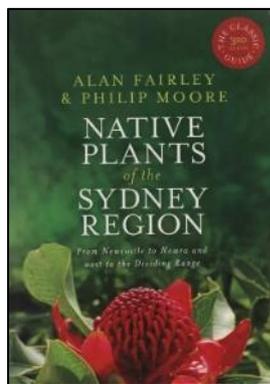


Simon & Schuster, 2003

Robinson's text is on matte paper with clear line drawings of those parts of the plant which are useful for identification. A good indication of scale uses a stick figure next to a round or oval plant. There are no photos and it's all in black and white.

Of the two, only Robinson's guide, where appropriate, gives fascinating information on the history, ecology, Aboriginal and European uses of each plants, together with references to literature and the journals of explorers.

Fairley's book is larger and so is less convenient for carrying on bush walks, but it has an easily accessible look with glossy pages and copious colour photos.



Allen & Unwin, 2010

Which one of these guides you prefer is a personal matter. For me, I find Fairley's guide with its colour photos more useful on a bush walk if I have no idea of the identity of the plant in question. I can flick through the pages until I get a sighting of it or something similar. I can then get a pretty good confirmation of its identification through a closer look at the photo, and by noting range, habitat and plant descriptions. I noticed on the recent Caves Creek walk, 2 copies of Fairley's Guide being consulted.

If I'm really serious, I can then consult Robinson when I get home, and look at the finer details of the plant, and associated history. Both books are good. Both, I believe, are worth having.

THANK YOU to all contributors to this September newsletter: Sarah Cains, Robyn Kremer, Jane Pye, Louise Egerton, Jane Lemann and Kris Gow.