

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

Southern Highlands Group

...your local native garden club

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Fallen onto the roadside, a leaf from *Eucalyptus cinerea* in gentle, Sunday morning rain.

Common around the Goulburn area and into the Highlands, this lovely gum grows into a small or medium sized tree, crooked, with a spreading crown. It displays leaves of various shapes. The juvenile leaves are opposite one another, round and have no leaf stalk. Mature leaves are alternate on the stem, have a short leaf stalk, and are broadly lanceolate.

Common name: Argyle Apple



The photo *left* shows juvenile foliage of *Eucalyptus cinerea*. Florists love these leaves for their pure silver colour and dusty bloom, their rounded shape and their unusual habit of growing straight off the stem with no leaf stalk or **petiole**. Stalkless leaves are described by the botanical term, **sessile**. In nature, if the tree is injured eg after fire, bunches of sessile leaves rapidly flush straight from the trunk. This is called **epicormic growth**. It enables the tree to feed itself or **photosynthesise** (make food from the sunlight) whilst the canopy regrows. Growers providing for the cut flower market exploit this natural habit by cutting the trees to force growth of these leaf stems for picking. In photo *right*, the leaves have matured to a typical, lanceolate 'gum leaf' shape and have developed a petiole. They retain their dusty bloom and silvery colour into maturity.

Another trait which can be noted in these pictures is the way eucalypt leaves begin life growing directly opposite one another along the stem. Later, they move to alternate positioning. As trees mature, all stems and branches twist, which moves leaves to an alternate arrangement along stems. Twisting is common to eucalypts and can easily be seen in branches and trunks of older trees. The habit makes for difficult and hazardous work for those who cut the trees for timber. Branches and trunks spring when they fall or are cut and the tension is released. This jams saws and causes the tree to 'jump', easily causing injury. SC

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Diary Dates

April 6th - 2.00pm meeting with speaker, Ben Walcott. Ben is President of ANPSA, the national parent body for APS. He is also leader for the Garden Design study Group. Ben's wife, Ros, is Editor of the outstanding newsletter produced by this group. Many of us heard Ben speak at the Macarthur Get Together in November last year when, in his talk, Ben took us through gardens they had met on their travels as well as a journey through their own remarkable native garden at Red Hill, in Canberra. This time, Ben will talk on "Let's visit some Australian Gardens". This will cover a variety of interesting gardens mostly native but a few, like Paul Bangay's garden, that are not native.

April 24th - 2.00pm Committee meeting at Bill's house. 2.00pm

May 4th - 2.00pm visit to the Robertson Rainforest led by Helen Tranter.

At approx 12.30pm, Mt Gibraltar Bushcarers meet at Bradman Oval for a picnic lunch (also wash rooms available) after Thursday morning work. Bendooley St side of the oval where there is a table and seating benches. Whether or not you are a Bushcare team member, please feel free to bring your lunch and join us for lunch and car pooling. 1.20pm cars will depart for Robertson.

From Helen: *Car directions:* Coming from the Moss Vale direction, turn right into Meryla St. just before the Hotel (opposite the church) and continue across the level crossing. Turn left into South St. at the T-junction. Parking for the Nature Reserve is about 100m on the left. We will be walking along the level 600m loop track through the Reserve. Any questions, Helen's phone number 4885 1394.

May15th - 2.00pm Committee meeting at Louise's house.

June 1st - Moss Vale CWA meeting 2.00pm with speaker, Dr Stephen Brown. Dr Brown's subject is butterflies. More detail in May NL.

June 19th - 2.00pm Committee meeting at Kris's

Snippets



Our group continues to flourish and grow. Welcome to **three new members**, Marjorie Lobban (at left in photo) Elaine Burnus, and Annabel Murray. Here they enjoy a picnic lunch with Jane Lemann at Bradman Oval before our visit to Sylvia David’s inspiring Bundanoon garden.

In **Acton, Canberra**, these **planter beds** were spotted. The

textured layering and natural colours drew us for a closer inspection and we discovered that they are built from old newspapers. They looked great and are certainly an environmentally friendly way to build. But they may not stand the test of time. They were beginning to slump and rot out a bit at the bottom. The beds are planted up with one of the *Acacia cognata* cvs- likely ‘Green Mist’ or ‘Limelight’.



And someone needs to take the strangling, black plastic tie off the trunk of the little gum tree in the foreground!
SC

A **Mittagong** friend told me this story recently.

There is a group of Mittagong gardens near bushland containing many native plants and attracting lots of native birds. The owners have been collectively delighting in the antics of a family of magpies which, have been enjoying their mini ecosystem. A nearby gardener became frustrated by curl grubs appearing in mown grass and sprayed his lawn with a pesticide. Soon after, a dead magpie was found - and then another and another, until the whole family was found, all dead. The sad native plant growers took the birds’ bodies for analysis and, yes, you guessed correctly. The poison laced curl grubs had wriggled to the surface and made an easy meal for the birds which then died from ingesting the toxic pesticide. SC



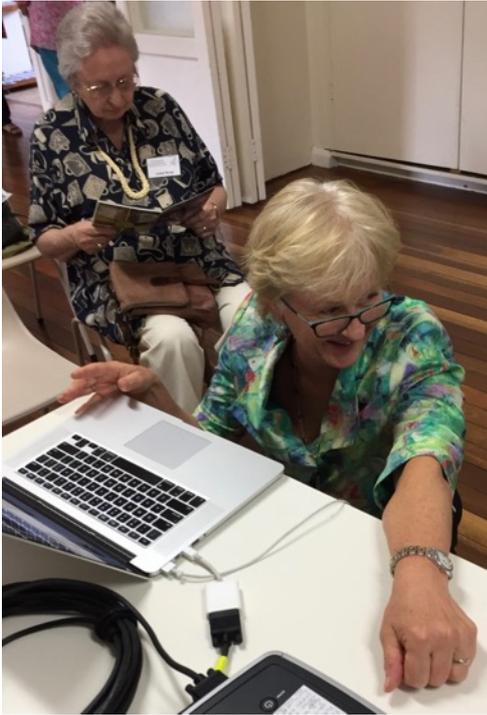
And speaking of poisons, did you know that we have the historically famous **poisonous** plant, **Hemlock**, growing locally? It thrives in weedy patches on **Mt Gibraltar and in other areas** around the shire. Botanical named, *Conium maculatum*, it belongs to the carrot family and is known by a few common names including carrot fern and spotted hemlock. Confusingly, the conifer, *Tsuga heterophylla* is also given the common name, hemlock. There is no relationship between the two plants. *Conium maculatum* is an invasive exotic species with **pretty, fernlike foliage and distinctive purple spots on the stems**. It grows in damp or poorly drained areas and can also inhabit drier places such as broken ground along roadways. All parts of the plant are poisonous to humans and animals, causing fatal paralysis if ingested in large quantities. Also, it can cause severe skin rashes on contact. The most famous victim of death by hemlock poisoning is **Socrates**. In ancient Greece (399BC) he was condemned to death by hemlock poisoning for supposedly corrupting the young men of Athens. He was dosed with a potent infusion of hemlock and died from slow paralysis. Socrates' death was described by Plato in the work, *Phaedo*. SC

February 2nd meeting and speaker, Heather Miles

Sarah Cains

We were fortunate to open our year with a visit and talk from Vice President of APS NSW, Heather Miles. There was a large and enthusiastic turn up for this first meeting.

To begin, Heather brought us up to date with the work of the Strategic Planning committee which is reviewing systems at APS NSW to ensure that it remains viable into the future. We thank Heather and the committee for the huge amount of work they are putting into turning the old ship around so that it does not end up on the rocks.



The subject of Heather's talk was the development of her two gardens, a large country garden (all natives) from 'scratch' and ongoing care of an established exotic garden in Sydney where she is experimenting with the inclusion of natives. The interest she has developed in this work has led Heather to undertake formal study in Horticulture and Landscape Design.

Since you were all there, I will not retell Heather's interesting and enjoyable garden story, but rather, will note some of her useful facts, hints and plant suggestions.

The country garden is on a 100 acre site in the Hunter region. The land is elevated, so she has little or no frost, but wind conditions are extreme. There were many sympathetic nods from Southern Highlanders when Heather described plants being torn from the ground by wind!

The garden project began in 2003. A deep ripper was used on the land, then herbicide sprayed and organic matter added before Heather and her husband planted forests;

these to contribute bio diversity, habitat and carbon capture. Mown pathways for walks were established between the trees.

Plants were mostly bought online. They were hand watered from tanks and protected from animals. Good growth was achieved, though some deaths were attributed mostly to poor/damaged soil structure interfering with water reticulation. In 2009 a review of the garden resulted in a more structured plan and stated aims. These included: accommodating views from the house; developing a 'walkabout' garden; fruit and veggies; more colour and texture; more structure to avoid the garden looking straggly. These aims are being achieved by more formality, bolder pruning and firmer lines. Strong edges are softened with 'spillers'. Architectural plants eg wind-firm, tall grasses and grass-like plants are used for contrast and wind deflection. In favour of wood chip, rock mulch is used near the house for fire retardant qualities.

Here are a few of the plants Heather mentioned as being successful and hardy contributors in her garden:

Grevillea 'Shaggy' / *Callistemon* sps 'Taree Pink' and 'Rocky Rambler' (bright red fl/dwarf form) / *Leptospermum flavescens* 'Cardwell' / *Eremophila* 'Kalbarri Carpet' / *Veronica perfoliata* / *Scaevola* sp (perform well in clay) / *Lomandra* 'Little Con' (dry conditions) / *Eremophila* 'Silver Ball' (dry) / *Stenanthemum scortechinii* (Sounds great! A small rockery plant)

The exotic garden in Killara poses a different set of challenges. Who amongst us would have the courage and conviction to be a 'purist' and take the mattock to beautiful, old North Shore rhododendrons or a mature maple?! Wisely, Heather is moving with caution and her goal is a mixed garden. She is experimenting with including some of the silver leafed natives and those bright, small-leafed Australians of neat habit which will blend so well with their foreign cousins.

Many thanks, Heather, for journeying to the Highlands and making our first meeting instructive and enjoyable.



Photo: Before Heather's talk, Committee member, Louise Egerton (left) chatted with with Eileen Burnus. Eileen is a capable and experienced plantswoman. She is responsible for teaching Kris Gow all about the propagation of native plants and will help out on the plant sales table.

Our Visit to Sylvia David's garden in Bundanoon

Wendy Johnson

On Thursday 2nd March, thirty members came out in showery weather to visit Sylvia's inspirational garden.. The committee feels that this confirms our new excursion time on Thursday afternoons is suitable for most members.

I live just around the corner from Sylvia's home and can remember walking by and noting the beginning of a new garden with just a few trees and shrubs...this was about three years ago and today there is a delightful well established garden... so appealing, with a colourful choice of shrubs including:



Indigofera, Banksia, Melaleuca, Callistemon, Telopea, Xerochrysum, Philotheca, Goodia and accompanying ground covers such as *Brachycome, Scaevola, Hibbertia* and various clumping plants. These are overlooked by *Eucalyptus pauciflora, Eucalyptus stellulata, Eucalyptus gregsoniana* and *Eucalyptus moorei* ... the latter grown from seed.

Sylvia is certainly a very capable plantswoman. It is hard to believe these trees are only three years old.

The back garden is of a more than generous size and is so appealing with an abundance of Australian plants. I should mention how healthy everything is, growing in basalt soil with plenty of sunshine. Just some of the wonderful plants alongside meandering pathways are *Corymbia eximia*, various *Correas, Ricinocarpus* and *Myoporum floribundum*. Other features of the back garden include a bountiful vegetable garden, a chicken run, a ready to harvest pumpkin patch, a sheltered bower for a feathered friend and a useful cottage garden. Sylvia's own artworks are a lovely highlight in the garden.



Among many species of *Callistemon* only two were in flower, C."Pink Champagne" and C. "In June". Sylvia is a collector of *Callistemons*. With her son, she is responsible for discovering three new species of this plant. In her care are these

very special species, two of which were found in the Megalong Valley. They are protected by Federal Legislation. Sylvia will need a special licence to propagate these. The other Callistemon is from the catchment lands at Burragorang and has a beautiful weeping habit. An identity and/or name is yet to be determined.



Last there are climbers festooning fences and the like .. here there and everywhere such as *Pandorea*, *Kennedia*, *Hardenbergia*, *Clematis* and *Cissus antarctica*.

This is just a short story about a young but well established garden, a true accomplishment.

Thank you Sylvia for the pleasure of our visit.

We had such a lovely time at Sylvia's garden. Here we are enjoying tea together as we sheltered from gentle rain.

Hot Summer Stories

*The exceptionally hot conditions endured by our plants and ourselves this summer set me thinking about varied conditions across our shire and how gardens and particular plants had fared. I asked **three** of our **gardeners** from different zones within the Highlands, Mittagong, Burradoo and Bundanoon, to write on this topic. SC*

Pam Tippet, Bundanoon (story and photos by Pam):

As our garden was to be open for the Bundanoon Garden Club to visit on 4th February, I was very busy doing jobs - infrastructure jobs such as finishing the annex to the anti bird cage, moving a compost heap to a new, less conspicuous location and general maintenance jobs such as weeding, mulching, pruning and generally tidying the whole garden. Things were looking pretty good until the really hot weather started. There were days when I had sprinklers going in various parts of the garden for most of the time - I'm expecting a large water bill. There were scorchings and losses despite the close attention. One of the most disappointing areas was around the pond which was, in early January, looking lovely with the bright green fronds of newly tidied and thinned *Blechnum sp* ferns and lush young foliage on the *Dicksonia antarctica*. I evidently didn't keep up the humidity and about four days into one of the hot spells in January I noticed the ferns were looking wilted and sad. Those fronds, the following day, were clearly dead - scorched.



The Blechnums, which had their feet in the moist soil next to the pond, fared better. The Dicksonia was scorched mostly on one side which makes me think that exposure to the sun was the cause - the side under a *Leptospermum sp* (small leaves) was scorched, whereas the side under a *Callistemon viminalis* (more shade) remains relatively unscathed. There is a young *Hymenosporum flavum* (native frangipani) planted to the north of the pond - I'm hoping it will eventually form a spreading canopy which will provide more dense shade than the tea tree does. I'm also planning to put a piece of poly pipe with spray jets under the eaves so that in future I can turn on the tap for 20 minutes or so occasionally to keep the ferns happy.



The three *Cyathea*s two *cooperi* and one from PNG - to the east of the pond seemed to thrive in the hot weather with virtually no canopy over them during the hottest part of the day. In winter it is the opposite: the *Dicksonia* doesn't mind the cold while the *Cyathea*s usually have a few fronds which go brown. I'm hoping this will change as they get taller. Other plants which languished and ultimately died were a *Dampiera purpurea*, a beautiful *Isopogon formosa*, which I may have paradoxically drowned when I noticed the tips were wilting, and a *Goodenia ovata* is on its way out. Even large well-established *Lomandra longifolia*s needed extra water. On the other hand most of the plants fared surprisingly well - the *acacias*, *philotheas*, *grevilleas*, *banksias*, *prostantheras*, *leptospermums*, *callistemons*,

melaleucas, *hakeas*, *westringias*, *croweas*, *correas* and other various small leafed shrubs seemed relatively untroubled by the heat. They may not have fared as well had I not been conscious of the need for everything to look as good as possible and so provided more water than they would have otherwise received. Weirdly, two instances of self pruning happened shortly after I'd thought 'I'll prune those branches (a leggy *Hakea sericea*, and one branch of the *Exocarpus cupressiformis*) after the 'Open Garden' - the next time I looked they were on the ground. The hot weather was certainly a trial, made much worse by having to not only keep the garden alive but looking as good as possible.



Jenny Simons' story from, Burradoo

My Australian plants have held up well during the trying hot days of this summer. A newly planted native garden was watered by hose and a couple of times by sprinkler, as necessary. A few of the new plants of tube stock size did not survive, but I think they were not going to survive anyway; they may have been unsuitable choices or were planted out too early. I should have potted them up and waited till they were growing strongly before I planted them in the garden.

Very little leaf burning occurred, the only noticeable damage being on Grevillea 'Lady O' which is in a pot in a hot position, but it continued to flower.

All my wattles continued to grow. Mature ones received no extra water; less advanced specimens were watered occasionally.

I have the impression that some plants grew more slowly but the eremophilas romped away. All the really well established plants in my original native plants garden seemed not to notice the extra heat.

I keep all these areas heavily mulched with pine bark which I am sure is a great help.

Robyn Kremer - Mittagong (story and photos by Robyn)



In the National Gallery of Victoria collection is a striking image of *Pandorea jasminoides* and *Clematis aristata* painted by botanical artist, Ellis Rowan. (photo at left)

A digital image is available on line & it is reproduced in the NGV publication entitled PAPER, that I received as a Christmas gift. (photo of Ellis Rowan work next page)

It was easy to convince myself that I was enjoying these two tough plants in our Mittagong garden. Bought as tube stock, planted in clay soil, they have thrived for decades by our path from car to door.

Both delight me with their vigorous climbing and abundant flowers.

Jenny Simons visited in January and I was sharing the story with her. Her eagle eye was not deceived. She emailed me with the news that I am growing *Jasminum suavisimum*, a native jasmine. The perfume is stunning and after a grand flush in early summer it continues to spot flower throughout the warmer months.

So I shall hopefully anticipate Kris Gow propagating a *Clematis aristata* for me as we saw it flowering on the Gib when Jane Lemann led us on a walk to see the

trachyte quarries last year. The jasmine and the clematis resemble one another closely, however I suspect that the jasmine's perfume attracts pollinators while the clematis has larger blooms.

These tough native climbers are unfazed by extreme heat and lack of water and respond well to pruning. I am amazed that their wiry stems and tendrils transmit moisture so efficiently. We also grow *Pandorea* 'Lady Di' which has pure white blooms and is very beautiful.

Throughout this hot, dry summer all our Australian plants have thrived, their roots protected by a layer of eucalyptus mulch.

Photo above right: *Jasminum suavisimum*) Robyn Kremer



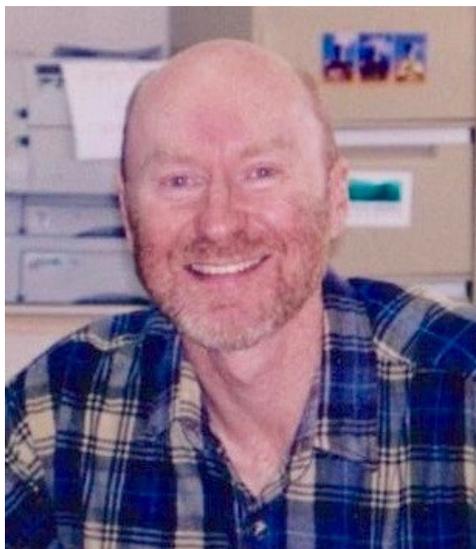
Photograph top of page reproduced by permission of The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

Ellis Rowan
Flower painting: *Pandorea jasminoides* and *Clematis aristata* c. 1887
watercolour and gouache
74.8 x 53.1 cm (image)

76.2 x 54.4 cm (sheet)
National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
Purchased, 1890 (1995.325)

Obituary: Ken Ferrier 22nd September, 1950 - 20th February, 2017

Trisha Arbib



Passionate and knowledgeable - knowledgeable and passionate sum up a lot of what has motivated Ken throughout most of his life.

From the Toowoomba water bird habitat to his membership and activity in the Australian Plant Society until recently, Ken has often been active in the forefront of environmental issues, that may have gone nowhere but for his involvement. Saving some of the endangered Highland Shale Woodland is a particular example.

Ken used his time with Wingecarribee Council to formulate and draft regulations in reference to the environment, be it burning off regulations or non-sanctioned clearing of roadside understorey vegetation.

Until health matters forced a reluctant end to it, Ken was often found actively participating in Bush Regeneration teams, be it on Mt Gibraltar, the Glow Worm Track or the Currabunda Wetlands in Bundanoon, to cite but three examples. He even found time to create a wonderfully natural habitat in his own house surrounds that has become the haunt of no fewer than six lyrebirds.

It is not only the people who knew him who will feel the loss of this gentle and passionate man, but the environment itself.



Snow gums grown by Sylvia David in her beautiful Bundanoon garden.