

AUSTRALIAN PLANTS SOCIETY

Southern Highlands Group

...your local native garden club

October garden visit
cancelled

SHAPS Committee:

President
Bill Mullard

Vice President
Louise Egerton

Secretary
Kim Zegenhagen

Treasurer
John Desmond

Newsletter Editor
Trisha Arbib

Communications
Erica Rink

Committee Member
Chris Goodwin

APS Committee
southernhighlandsaps@gmail.com

[www.austplants.com.au/
Southern-Highlands](http://www.austplants.com.au/Southern-Highlands)



It wouldn't be a spring issue without a cover photo of wattle. Here seen along a little back road past the Bundanoon quarry. And there is more on wattles in the newsletter. Kim on rare wattles and Erica on obtaining seed from the APS Acacia study group. And several of our local members have sent in their beautiful photos of wattle in flower.

It's sad to have not been able to get together again. I hope that reading this newsletter in some small way brings us together as a group. And we are so fortunate to have our plants, both in the garden and in the bush to enjoy.

You will see from the newsletter that the committee has produced a Mission Statement and an Acknowledgement of Country.

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Upcoming Program

Sadly we have to **cancel our October garden visit** due to the coronavirus.

We have pencilled in a Bundanoon garden visit on November 4th and our Xmas end of year party December 2nd. Things may well open up by then. We will need to watch out for email notifications closer to the dates.

**Message from the President, Bill Mullard**

Welcome to the September issue of our Newsletter and a big thanks to Trish Arbib for pulling it all together once again.

Obviously, it has been a difficult year for us all and for our Society. We did manage to hold a few outdoor events until May but our last and only indoor gathering this year was in June at the CWA hall. We are optimistic that we will be able to have a garden visit in November and our Xmas picnic in December.

The good news is that we have had 32 new members join our group in the last 12 months, including 5 joint members, and in addition 7 members from other APS Groups have nominated our group as their "extra" group.

A big welcome to our new members. Hopefully we will all be able to meet in person in the not-too-distant future, put some names to faces and catch up with those we have already met.

Stay safe and warmest regards.

New Southern Highlands APS Members

Members who have joined over the last 12 months.

Julie	Martin	Canyonleigh
Alan	Olsen	Bowral
Amy	Press	Bundanoon
Andrette	Plangger	Burradoo
Bobbi	Ballas	Bundanoon
Christine	Hannan	Moss Vale
Christopher	Bourne	Sydney
Cynthia	Rouse	Mount Murray
Harper	Wright	Burradoo
Helen	Worrall	Bundanoon
Helen	Harrison	Bowral
Ibrahim	Muharrem	Bowral
Janet	Wright	Burradoo
Jennifer	Slattery	Colo Vale
John	Carter	Burradoo
Luke	Maitland	Robertson
Lynnette	Timmis	Moss Vale
Maree	Tynan	Mittagong
Margaret	Hammond	Moss Vale
Marlene	Murray	Mittagong
Mim	Merrick	Burrawang
Nick	Robinson	Marrickville
Pamela	Bennett	Bowral
Peter	Lockwood	Balmoral Village
Robert	McGregor	Mittagong
Rod	Smart	Mittagong
Shannon	Peters	Mittagong
Stephen	Press	Bundanoon
Susan	Head	Mittagong
Terry	Dunlea	Bowral
Wendy	Smedley	Burradoo
Winsome	Hall	Bundanoon

People with
Southern Highlands
as extra group

Murray	Robinson	Mirador
Deborah	Zwi	Werri Beach
Jillian	Craven	Giralang
Jason	Mathers	Mount Annan
Kelly	Upton	Wollongong
Talia	Buckley	Narellan Vale
Saoirse	Aherne	Fairy Meadow

The Acknowledgement of Country below has been posted on our website and will preface our meetings in future.

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of this continent, never ceded, their grief at loss of country, languages and culture, and their struggle for survival on their own terms.

Especially the Gundungurra and Tharawal peoples, traditional owners of the land where we live today

SHAPS MISSION STATEMENT, September 2021

SHAPS is a regional group of Australian Plant Society NSW. Our mission is to promote the knowledge and appreciation of Australian native plants and in particular the unique flora of the Southern Highlands. We are interested in the botanical features of plants, their care and propagation and their place in both gardens, the bush and in the wider environment. To further these aims we carry out a range of activities:

- We hold meetings where knowledge and plants are shared among members
- Guest speakers with special expertise are invited to address the group
- Visits are made to local and regional gardens
- We liaise with other regional groups and organisations with common interests
- Advice is provided to Council and community groups regarding native plantings
- Plants are propagated and sold at meetings and other gatherings.

Western Australia – Eremophilas and More

Louise Egerton

Eremophilas

After a 3-month sojourn around Western Australia, we recently dashed home across three states as Covid tightened its grip on NSW. We just managed to squeeze in a visit to both King's Park in Perth and the Arid Botanic Gardens in Port Augusta in SA. These gardens are stupendous. Like kids in a lolly shop, we raced around gasping at the irrepressible flowering gums but I was especially impressed by the eremophilas.

The diversity of *Eremophila* species—aka Fuchsia Bushes, Poverty Bushes, Emu Bushes—is astonishing. There are around 200 species. The flowers come in every colour under the sun. All are 'designed' to encourage animal pollinators but those with blue, white and mauve flowers are inviting insect visitors. Interior freckles provide a guide into their long, slightly curved floral tube. One lobe is lowered to provide a landing platform and an upper one peels slightly back to enable easy access. The stamens lie within. Those with red, orange, yellow or green flowers appeal to birds. They have a more open throat with the top lobe

arching forward, the back one peeling back and the stamens protruding from the floral tube. On our travels we saw many honeyeaters breakfasting on early-morning nectar from these flowers. The fruits, too, are delectable to birds, namely Emus, thus the name.



Eremophila maculata pink to orange



Eremophila arachnoides ssp *arachnoides*



Eremophila youngii



Eremophila gibsonii

More Snapshots from Western Australia – Louise Egerton



Holly Grevillea, G. wickhamii

As we made our way north and west to the Pilbara the spectacular red flowers of this slender bush appeared everywhere. I was struck by the beautiful flowers that hung like pendulous earrings showcased beside silky grey-green leaves that belied their prickly lobes.



Sturt's Desert Pea, Swainsona formosa

I had always wanted to see this plant in the wild but never had I expected to see it flowering with such profluence, its furry bluish pinnate leaves sprawling along the sides of roads and in the swales of dunes. The calyx-sheathed keels arise from a raceme. As they mature they unfurl a startling scarlet to point skyward and ground-ward. At the centre lies a black shiny bulge known as a 'boss' which looks for all the world like a miniature surveillance camera.



Pink Poker, Grevillea petrophiloides

In the rugged gorges of the Murchison River that cuts through Kalbarri National Park it is something of a shock to come across these bright pink flowers that shoot up on long straight stems around a metre above their leafy bush.



Sandalwood flowers, Santalum spicatum

There is much more to this small, slow-growing tree from WA's semi-arid shrublands than its undistinguished appearance, with its twisted gnarled trunk and small flowers, would suggest. Highly prized for its aromatic timber, it commands high prices on the international market. Wild sandalwood has been exported since 1844 and is becoming rare but plantations, due to come on line in 2026, may take off some of the pressure. A helping hand from the Brush-tailed Bettong or Woylie which buries sandalwood nuts for later consumption might also assist with seed distribution but unfortunately, they are critically endangered.

Tawny Frogmouth – A Story of a Rescuer Named Moey

Fran Mullard

No doubt most of us have heard of or seen pictures of the strikingly different bird called the Tawny Frogmouth, once seen, never forgotten.



There are several different types of frogmouths but the tawny is the only uniquely Australian frogmouth, the “*Podargus strigoides*”, and is found over a wide range of the country. Tawny frogmouths are nocturnal but can be seen during the daytime, blending seamlessly with their surroundings, posing, it seems, as branches of the tree in which they are sitting. They have a long lifespan and pair for life and, barring accidents, once established in a particular area, may remain there for at least a decade.

Therefore, it is not difficult for them to become part of one’s consciousness if one is lucky enough to offer the right conditions and environment.

Bill and I left Sydney for the Southern Highlands in June 1975. I began teaching at Moss Vale Primary School and Bill took up employment at Vale Engineering in Moss Vale. We bought and built our home on a twenty-five acre bushland block at Exeter and moved there in 1979. We soon became attuned to the varied and beautiful birdlife which surrounded us and were especially intrigued by some particular and rather haunting calls at night...mellow, slowly-ascending hooting calls, which we identified as those of the tawny frogmouth.

We kept our eyes and ears open and eventually we saw them, despite their pretence of being the branches of a tree. Once aware we were able to observe them over time. Their scientific name translates as “owl-like gouty old man”, which I feel is an offensive and undeserved description given that the young tawny is as cute and lovable as any puppy or baby koala!

Serendipitously, one morning before school, one of my students, the daughter of a local veterinarian, rushed excitedly into the classroom clutching a large cage, in which sat a tawny frogmouth. It transpired that the frogmouth, already named Moey and assigned the male gender, had been left for dead, the victim of a hit-and-run accident. Fortunately, a passer-by retrieved him and took him to the vet who, miraculously, managed to save him from an untimely demise. Moey had not, however, remained unscathed and had suffered severe brain damage. He could not fend for himself at all. He could not even feed himself and had to be spoon fed.

My young student spent the morning touring all the classrooms, showing Moey off to mostly quite startled audiences with the view to finding a permanent home for him. Her efforts were fruitless, so Moey returned to the vet once more, only to resurface the next day and the whole endeavour repeated, still to no avail. So (you’ve probably already guessed it) Bill and I became Moey’s surrogate parents and, as such, noted that Moey had an endearing and stoic personality, despite his setbacks.

Bill built a roomy cage for him to protect him from harm and set it atop a fencepost close to trees and observable from the house. He was taken out of the cage every day and set down in the garden. He had to be spoon-fed twice a day. Moey was given pet food, “Jellymeat Whiskas” I recall, which provided balanced nutrition for him. His diet was supplemented by bush-tucker when possible, all caught and hand fed by Bill, and when it was bogong moth season, he would eat them until there

was no room for more! Unfortunately, Moey didn't have an off button when it came to food. His eyes lit up in anticipation when the odd field mouse was on the menu. He seemed to sense that something different was on offer...or I might be just anthropomorphising!

At the time we had a cattle dog pup named Saskia (another pet brought home by me after a class excursion to the Moss Vale Show). She soon learned to line up in the garden beside Moey to receive a couple of spoonfuls of pet food. At no time did she attempt to harm him, but they did make a rather odd couple!

In the evenings during breeding season, we noticed that Moey was attracting the interest of other wild tawnies, who flew silently and gracefully through the trees to perch near his cage and observe him. This behaviour led us to believe that Moey was in fact not a he but a she.

We had Moey for six years or so before putting him into the care of a friend who was a Parks and Wildlife Ranger at Fitzroy Falls. Thus Moey became the much loved pet of his three delightful little girls. Moey continued to live with the family for several years before succumbing, a testament to his species' longevity. He was found, just before dusk, still upright in the garden, still pretending to be a tree branch. I am assured the girls gave him a solemn and fitting funeral.

The tawny frogmouth does not have the profile of other iconic birds such as the magpie and cockatoo but there is too much to know and learn about this endearing species to be included in this short story. If you would like to know more, I commend to you a book by Gisela Kaplan called "TAWNY FROGMOUTH". It is one of the CSIRO AUSTRALIAN NATURAL HISTORY SERIES published in 2007.

SHAPS Members' Spring Photos – It's Not All About Wattles!

Charles Harper Wright, Barbara Eckersley, Pam Tippett, Paul Osborne

I was thrilled that SHAPS members sent in their spring photos, some from their gardens, others from bush walks. Too many photos from some contributors to print them all, but all welcome. And there are more! Of wattles. These I have grouped with our wattle story. This would be great as a regular feature. Summer flowers next time!



*Sundew, **Drosera sp.** Along a track near Welby Weir. Photo Paul Osborne*



*Woolly Pomaderris, **P. lanigera** in Morton National Park. Photo Barbara Eckersley*



Epacris longiflora photo taken on the side of the shallow pools at the top of the Carrington Falls. Photo Charles Harper Wright



Olearia species? Photo Barbara Eckersley from her garden



Alyogyne sp. Photo Pam Tippett from her garden



Is this a Trigger plant ***Stylidium sp.*** in Morton National Park? Similar, but no sign of the trigger. Photo Barbara Eckersley



Kennedia rubicunda climbing up a tree in Morton National Park Photo Barbara Eckersley



Early ***Isopogon anemonifolius*** flowers. At Fitzroy Falls. Not fully open and no sign of the red foliage of winter. Photo Charles Harper Wright



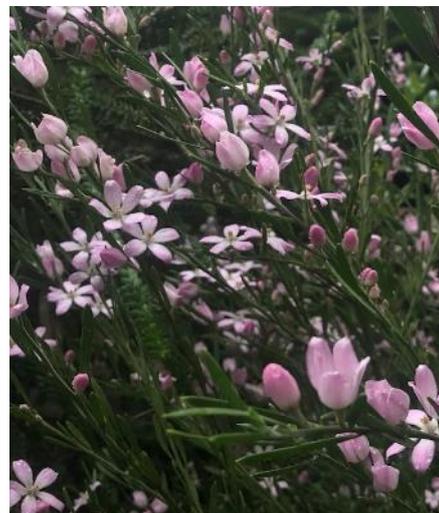
Indigofera australis in my Bundanoon garden. I've seen quite a few pea flowers lately. Yellow/red egg and bacon pea plants as both a twiggy small shrub and a ground cover in the Bundanoon bush; Hardenbergia violacea; a fine leaf small shrub with violet flowers, perhaps Hovea linearis in the bush; and Hovea lanceolata in my garden; plus the Kennedia and the Goodia sp. in this group of photos. Photo Trish Arbib



Leucopogon setiger? Close to the lookout on the Boxvale Walking Track. Photo Charles Harper Wright



Goodia sp. This shrub is glowing and smothered in flowers. Photo Pam Tippett from her garden



Eriostemon australasius This is one of only two Eriostemon species native to Australia that were not transferred to the genus Philotheca. Photo Pam Tippett from her garden

Wattles, wattles, wattles! Part 2

Kim Zegenhagen

In the last newsletter it was incorrectly stated that Cootamundra wattles are native to the local area. This cannot be further from the truth. They are not native to these parts and have in fact become a pest in Morton National Park. I incorrectly read information about the presence of Cootamundra wattles in local national parks and took it to mean they were naturally occurring instead of noting they are a nuisance native weed. It was at least satisfying to know my article was read. I thank those astute readers for pointing out the error.

Erica Rink, a SHAPS committee member, jumped at the opportunity to find out how to propagate some rare and endangered acacias. Erica contacted the Acacia Study Group and has obtained seeds for 5 rare acacias. It is hope that successful propagation can be undertaken, and we will be able to offer these plants for sale at a future general meeting:

Acacia bynoeana

Also known as Bynoe's Wattle or Tiny Wattle

It grows to 0.5 metres. It is considered vulnerable. It grows in sandy soils as a part of heathland and dry sclerophyll forest conditions. It is in the Southern Highlands in very few numbers, so we need to help its recovery.

Acacia flocktoniae

Also known as Flockton Wattle

This acacia grows 2-4 metres tall in dry to wet sclerophyll forest and grassy woodlands. It is rare and has been bush fire affected. It grows on Nattai-Morton sandstone. Another rarity that needs TLC.

Acacia hamiltoniana

Also known as Hamilton's Wattle

Hamilton's wattle grows to 3 metres and is considered bushy. Its natural range is from Rylstone in the north to Clyde River in the south. It grows in sandy or loamy soils as part of heathland and eucalyptus woodland communities. It too is rare and has been bush fire affected. We need to help in its recovery.

Acacia mabellae

Also known as Mabel's Wattle

Mabel suffered badly in the fires in Morton National Park. It can typically grow from 3 to 10 metres and has a range from Camden to Bermagui. It grows in gullies in sandy soils as part of open eucalyptus woodland. A wattle that needs our help.

Acacia subtilinervis

Also known as Net Veined Wattle

It grows from 1-4 metres. Not a lot of information about this tree could be found. It is rare and in our local environs seems to have been found only Morton NP (102 specimens) and just one lonely tree in Bangandilly NP, near Canyonleigh.

Erica and Kim will start propagating these precious seeds soon. We have only a few seeds of each of these rare wattles, and are asking for **experienced** propagators to assist. Please send an email to: southernhighlandsaps@gmail.com if you can help.

More on the Acacia Study Group from [Erica Rink](#)

Kim's report about the Cootamundra wattle spurred me on to see what the APS (Australia) Acacia Study Group had on offer. I was able to source 5 out of the 8 species regarded as rare or endangered in our area. John from the Study Group said he would try and source the others for me from Victoria. I had been a member of the Study Group and thought it would go on forever but had to renew. You have to go the main Australian Native Plant Society (Australia) to find them. I googled "Acacia Study Group Australian plant society" and it took me straight there. It's a wonderful source of a huge variety of wattles. You just pay for postage on what you order. There's plenty of information on all aspects of wattle life from seed to seedlings, planting out and care thereafter. Previous newsletters are also available to view. There are links to all the Study Groups as well as the APS (Australia) site itself. Full of information to browse. I highly recommend joining at least one Study Group or more. Many of them are free when they are email only. Good for lockdown reading.

SHAPS Members' Garden Wattle Photos

Margaret Weatherall, Chris Goodwin, Pam Tippett



A fascinating wattle with red tipped young foliage, which self-seeded in a member's Mittagong garden. It is about three foot high but very scrawny and this is the first presentation of the mature leaves. The red tip wasn't as obvious with the immature leaves. Flowers are very sparse. Photo Chris Goodwin. Does anyone know its name?



*"Little Flori", a compact form of **Acacia floribunda**. Grows well in full sun or dappled shade in well drained soil. Masses of soft yellow flowers from winter into early spring. Once established it will tolerate periods of dry & frost conditions. This plant is two years old. Photo Margaret Weatherall.*



Acacia cultriformis. Photo Chris Goodwin



Acacia drummondii Bushy growth, prolific flowering. Requires little care. Purchased online at Sydney Wildflower Nursery. Photo Chris Goodwin



Acacia 'Lime Majik' Photo by Pam Tippet in her Bundanoon garden



Prickly Moses, *Acacia ulicifolia* Photo Pam Tippet

Snippets

A SUCCESS STORY of the native variety - Kristine Gow



Grevillea iaspicula, commonly known as "Wee Jasper" grevillea, is an endangered plant of New South Wales due to its low numbers in its natural habitat.

The species was only botanically described in 1986 and the plant used for taxonomic purposes was located on a private property.

Since its discovery it has been put into horticulture and reintroduced to the Wee Jasper area.

In the 1990's its major threats were bush fires, drought and feral goats. A large area was fenced and goats eradicated.

The pink and cream spider-like flowers are a magnet for bees and native birds. It will grow in full sun to part shade, hardy to heavy frosts and in most soil

conditions.

It can be trimmed heavily to maintain shape or in the larger garden allowed to grow naturally as a great screening plant due to its dense habit.

I have a trimmed plant in my yard and a larger specimen on the council verge.

It is a no fuss plant and flowers from July to April, nearly 12 months of the year.

NSW Connects Webinar Series from the External Education Team, Department of Planning Industry and Environment

Some webinars for September coming up:

Threatened flora recovery tales from South-East NSW after the bush fires

Tuesday 21 September, 12.00pm-1.00pm

Saving the Kangaloon Sun Orchid. It is a critically endangered orchid from the Southern Highlands of NSW. The Saving our Species project and Mount Annan Botanic Gardens are working together to understand and conserve this beautiful species

Wednesday 22 September, 12.00pm-1.00pm

Which Glossy Cockatoo is that and what is she eating?

Wednesday 29 September, 12.00pm-1.00pm

You need to register for the webinars.

What's coming up after September?

[Go here to register and for more webinars coming soon in October](#)

It's wonderful that there are so many members to thank this month for their contributions. I'd like to thank Bill Mullard, John Desmond, Louise Egerton, Fran Mullard, Charles Harper Wright, Barbara Eckersley, Pam Tippett, Paul Osborne, Kim Zegenhagen, Erica Rink, Margaret Weatherall, Chris Goodwin and Kristine Gow.

Contributions are always welcome. Please write to me at trisharbib@gmail.com with suggestions.

And don't forget I'd love your photos of late spring/early summer Australian native flowers. Flowers from your garden or from the bush, for the November newsletter.

MANY THANKS
to all
contributors to
this newsletter.

