



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2016

RIVERSDALE PLANT SALE

Billed as a rare plant sale, a number of plant sale stalls materialised in the Riversdale grounds. Opposite us was the plant stall for the GROWING ABILITIES group where people with a disability propagate plants for sale, including a good percentage of native plants.

I was at our stall for the setup and another later time slot - probably not at the peak of activity. I do not have any figures for plant sales but I don't think our sales would have matched our expectation. I thought that as the day wore on, the general atmosphere resembled that in typical markets.

The most interesting thing to come out of this activity and indeed the Windellama field day (held a week later) was that we gained three new memberships and there are a few more memberships in the offing.



APS stall at Riversdale rare Plant Sale (photo - Pauline)

WINDELLAMA FIELD DAY

Once again, the reality was a bit below expectation. Again I was there only for some of the time and I could not give a full report. We did manage to sell some of our excess wattle stock. If it were a choice between Riversdale and Windellama, I would tend to choose the latter.

NEW MEMBERS

We have three confirmed new members from the plant sale days in November. We extend a warm welcome to Leigh and Roger

Tuck and to Sarah Bridge. We look forward to their input and suggestions. Leigh and Roger have been ANPS members in the Canberra Region.

WETLANDS GARDEN ACTIVITIES

These were held on November 16 and 23. On the first date, plantings took place in a new section of garden that Jen is looking after. On November 23, there was a more general maintenance day with rakes, mattocks etc in use.

MOSS VALE MEETING/TALK

Three members accepted the invitation from the Southern Highlands Group and attended their meeting and talk at Moss Vale on Thursday 3rd November. It was a well attended meeting with guests from the South Coast Group and in all about 20-30 people attending. Their guest speaker gave an interesting background to the project to restore the natural vegetation on the Five Island Nature Reserve off the coast east of Port Kembla. The vegetation restoration will allow the return of nesting sea birds and is based upon the successful removal of invasive Kikuyu on Montague island off Narooma on the South Coast. Jen Ashwell took the opportunity to chat to the speaker Dr Kevin Mills who some years ago had carried out a survey of the vegetation on the Narrangarril Reserve which we visited and surveyed in spring this year.

One interesting feature of the get together was a table covered in flowering native plant cuttings from various member's gardens. It was a stunning display of the variety and beauty of our flowering natives and gave rise to the thought that we may be able to tap into their knowledge and collections of native plants suitable for gardens and collect propagating material for our sales program in this district.

(Thanks to Bob for this article).

XANTHORRHOEA JOHNSONII

Pauline took the photo shown over on a visit to a property near Lake George recently. I hadn't come across this species before. A check on PlantNet revealed that its distribution extends north from Singleton with inland and near-coastal occurrences. Apparently it is a very variable species and may be 'divided'. The specimen in the photo is about ten years old and it clearly has been growing happily next to what seems to be a concrete wall. Soils near the base of walls like this can become limey or alkaline over time but this specimen seems to be in excellent condition. One could speculate as to whether its location near a concrete heat bank has contributed to its condition.

As mentioned, the property overlooks Lake George but on the less-frequented eastern side. Pauline will look into a possible visit to the property not just to see the grass tree but also for the plant and bird life in

the area. It is an area we have never been to.



Xanthorrhoea johnsonii - photo from Pauline

APS FEES

Now for the bad news. APS NSW is raising the membership fees and it has requested that it be publicised in group newsletters.

The new rates that will apply are:

Individual Concession \$48

Joint Concession \$58 (higher rate of increase for this category)

Individual Ordinary \$56

Joint Ordinary \$66

Memberships can be paid for in 3-year blocks, thus avoiding any price increases in that time.

APOLOGY

Some members know that my wife, Anne, has dementia that has been progressing for a few years. Managing this condition has forced me to miss APS events particularly in the last few months. This situation will continue for a while as there are no quick simple solutions. Currently, I am still occupying the position of president - but could stand down if that is required.

NARRANGARRIL SPECIES LIST

This list is near finalisation and Jen will forward its shortly to the NPWS. She will also be forwarding the list from back Arm Reserve from September of last year - which Rodney ('Field Nats') had initially undertaken last year. It is hoped that these reports (as comprehensive as we can make them) will enable us to have further access to other reserves/national parks that are currently without public access. Bob in the article on the Moss Vale visit (above) referred to Dr Kevin Mills who has previously done a floral survey for the NPWS in Narrangarril. Our own survey in Spring have added significantly to Kevin Mills' list. Different visit times and perhaps different pathways through the reserve have contributed to this.

THE SEASON

One of the wetter winters and wet early Springs for some time have resulted in excellent growth among all our plants - both garden and bush. The weeds, however, have not been asleep and people will have noticed the massive displays of capeweed earlier in Spring. On my own place, Chilean needle grass has been thicker than it has been for quite a few years - and similar remarks could be made for the other annual weeds. I thought the flowering this Spring was actually helped by the colder weather we experienced in September and October. I think that plants remained in flower for longer. With the heat of the last two weeks or so, things have gotten back to normal and many plants are setting seed now at their usual rate. From now on would be a good time to collect seed from desirable species before it 'goes'. Propagation had been slow earlier on and some of the cuttings we have from February are now up to speed and will shortly be ready for market.

Passing a *Callistemon citrinus* yesterday I noticed a butterfly on a flower spike - with a colour scheme that I am not familiar with. After rushing in to get the phone, the butterfly obliged by not flying off and stayed fairly still for long enough to take a few shots. One of these (cropped) is shown below. A quick look on Google revealed a pdf titled '*Butterflies of the Illawarra*'. There were photos of a few butterflies that looked quite similar but none that was an exact match.



AGM AND END-OF YEAR FUNCTION

Bob has sent out the information regarding this event at Tony and Sandra's property off Back Arm Road. I will not be attending for the reason given. I trust that all will enjoy the walk, the meeting and the socialising at lunch.

In addition, I wish everybody the best for Christmas and the New Year. Our activity will start up again in February.

CALENDAR

Sat Dec 3	Christmas get-together and walk at Tony and Sandra's property at Back Arm
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