



APS HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER NEWSLETTER - April 2022

NEXT HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER EVENT:

**Outdoor Event – Ceremonial Planting Day at Sylvan Grove
Wednesday 4th May from 10:30 am
Sylvan Grove Native Garden, 7 Sylvan Grove, Picnic Point
Tour this Magnificent Garden
Celebrate past members & our new name
With a chance to socialise over morning tea**

Please RSVP to Liz on elsmere02@gmail.com in case of cancellation.

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Welcome to the April 2022 edition of the APS Harbour Georges River Group Newsletter. Since our April meeting was washed out, we have some more on propagating plants in your back yard/ balcony this month. Please reply to this email if you are interested in joining a propagating group within HGR. We have a report on someone else's meeting instead, and on the Royal Easter Show. Congratulations to our president Marie for her efforts in floral displays.

There are more plants for sale too – a fine collection from Karlo's green fingers. Photos scattered thru the newsletter & available at our meeting at Sylvan Grove. Hope to see you there.

Dorothy Luther, Editor

In the spirit of reconciliation, the APS Harbour Georges River group acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.

<https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River>

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

I hope you all enjoyed the Easter Season & celebrations with family and friends.

Des came home after 3 weeks in hospital for rehabilitation and learning how to use a walker & improve his balance.

The Royal Easter Show was a success again this year in showing our native plants. I had fun with the grasses, nuts, berries, foliage & flowers. I entered 3 arrangements and won a third place. Banksias were in abundance this year, as they're flowering in profusion.

Next Wednesday we are gathering at Sylvan Grove to remember Hugh, Kyrill, Margaret & Graham. I am looking forward to seeing you all there.

Thanks to Dorothy for filling in for me the last few weeks.

Warmest regards to all,

Marie O'Connor.

President Harbour Georges River Group APS NSW.

Photos from the Royal Easter Show, taken by Marie:



2 Nuts, fruits, seeds & foliage. Marie O'Connor's third place



1 Prize winning entries in native floral arrangements sections



NEXT MEETING

Sylvan Grove

Our May meeting is the ceremonial planting day at **Sylvan Grove** to celebrate the lives & passing of senior APS members - Kyrill Taylor, Graham and Margaret Walters and Hugh Stacey. The date is **Wednesday 4th May with the event starting at 10:30am**.

For more information about Sylvan Grove Native Garden:

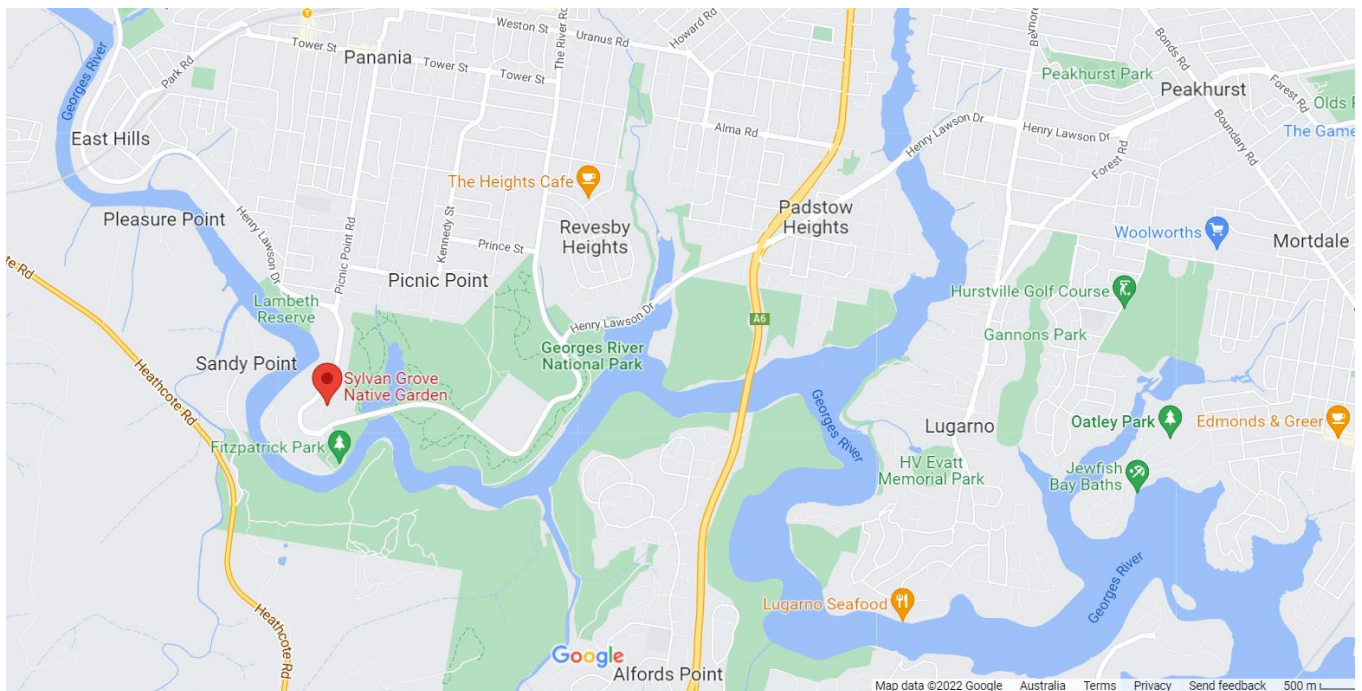
<https://www.cbcity.nsw.gov.au/environment/parks-reserves/sylvan-grove-native-garden>

<https://www.facebook.com/SylvanGroveNativeGarden>

We will have a ceremonial planting of three rainforest trees in their memory and in recognition of their valued contribution to APS and particularly to the East Hills Group (recently renamed Harbour Georges River Group).

This will also be an opportunity to learn about the East Hills Group and to launch the new name of our group.

Sylvan Grove Native Garden, 7 Sylvan Grove, Picnic Point, is in the South Western corner of



our patch, off Henry Lawson Drive. Sylvan Grove is a dead end street with limited parking, but you can park in Henry Lawson Drive.

We will have tours of the gardens & morning tea will be served. It's recommended to bring a folding chair as there is a small covered area with toilets, a table & urn, but limited seating.

We have invited all APS members as well as family and friends. So, this is a chance to meet APS members from other groups as well as our own group.

Contingency Plan

Since La Nina is hanging about still, we need a plan in the event of heavy rain. Please advise Liz by email on elsmere02@gmail.com if you are intending to come to the event so we can let you know if there is a change of plans.

The Bureau of Meteorology promises light showers only.

LAST MEETING

South Maroubra Dunes Picnic

The bad news is that the outing was postponed due to our guide being in lockdown, bad weather & the damage to the track by the extreme waves of the previous weekend. The good news is that Boyd survived lockdown without mishap & is now out and about again. He recommends that we reschedule the event to August or October, as more heath plants will be in flower at that time.

Plants for Sale

There is no plant table this month, but we do have some plants for sale, propagated by Karlo, who has provided this list. Thanks to Jan & Dave for adding the common names. Please contact Graham on fryg45@gmail.com if interested & he will bring the plants to Sylvan Grove for collection. The plants are advanced specimens and priced at \$7 each.

<i>Ajuga australis</i>	Austral Bugle
<i>Banksia serrata</i> – local species	Old-man Banksia
<i>Buckinghamia celsissima</i>	Ivory Curl Tree
<i>Callistemon linearis</i> – local species	Narrow-leaved Bottlebrush
<i>Callistemon pinifolius</i> (green fl.) – local form	Pine-leaved Bottlebrush
<i>Chorizema cordatum</i>	Heart-leaf Flame Pea
<i>Citrus australasica</i>	Finger Lime or Australian Finger Lime
<i>Coronidium elatum</i>	White Paper Daisy or Tall Everlasting
<i>Correa lawrenciana</i>	Mountain Correa
<i>Correa reflexa</i> (green fl.) - local form	Common Correa or Native Fuchsia
<i>Dendrobium kingianum</i>	Pink Rock Orchid
<i>Dianella caerulea</i> – local species	Blue Flax-lily
<i>Doryanthes excelsa</i>	Giant Lily or Gynea Lily
<i>Eremophila drummondii</i>	Drummond's Eremophila
<i>Eremophila mackinlayi</i>	Desert Pride
<i>Eucalyptus sideroxylon</i>	Mugga Ironbark
<i>Grevillea bronwenae</i>	
<i>Hibiscus geranioides</i>	Dwarf Native Hibiscus
<i>Hoya australis</i>	Native Hoya

<i>Isotoma</i> 'Fizz'n'Pop'	
<i>Libertia paniculata</i>	Branching Grass-flag
<i>Pelargonium australe</i> hybrid	Native Storksbill or Wild Geranium
<i>Plectranthus parvifolius</i> (variegated form)	Cockspur Flower
<i>Prostanthera linearis</i>	Narrow-leaved Mint-bush
<i>Pseuderanthemum variable</i> (purple fl.)	Pastel Flower
<i>Zieria prostrata</i>	Headland Zieria – threatened species

Note

P. parvifolius is a south Asian species. *P. parviflorus* is a local species with common name Cockspur Flower



Figure 4 *Ajuga australis*



Figure 3 *Hibiscus geranioides*



Figure 5 *Libertia paniculata*



Figure 6 *Pseuderanthemum variable*

above images from Gardening with Angus or Wikipedia

GROUP NEWS

Member Introductions - Dorothy Luther



Newsletter editor, deputy president, general stirrer. Dorothy had been an inactive member of the APS for many years, moving from the Inner Sydney group to City St George and then on to East Hills as the groups folded.

Dorothy was born on a farm near Oberon so grew up in The Bush. She worked for many years in the computer industry at the interface between the computer people and the business people, giving her a wide experience of different types of industry and roles. In recent times, she's been tutoring at various universities in her areas of expertise. She has a BSc and MSc in computer science.

Dorothy cherishes an ambition of applying her skills and experience to enable APS to have more impact and achieve its goals, by utilising Information & Communication Technologies (ICT). At this time, her energies and enthusiasm are being applied to the Harbour Georges River District Group, where we are rebuilding from a small base.

Backyard Propagation

During the HGR March 2022 (Zoom) meeting, there was some discussion of mini-greenhouses and other ways to look after cuttings and seedlings. Jan wrote a story about the cutting frame she uses for propagation, which was in the newsletter.

This month Graham & Jan are providing more advice on the logic of propagation kit design, and on growing cuttings in your new kit.

Cutting Frames, Glasshouses & Greenhouses



This is my very mini cutting frame/ propagation box. The plastic box is from Kmart and has cuttings of *rhododendron lochia*, *scaevola* & a small *hibbertia* of unknown species. I also have some runners from a native raspberry (*rubus parvifolius*) from my 12-month-old plant, not in the box.

I noticed that the lid of the box is often wet on the underside, so I asked the experts whether this was a problem or not.

From Graham,

There are greenhouses and propagation boxes. Greenhouses are basically structures with walls of fine mesh to protect plants from direct sunlight and heavy rain and possibly provide more humid atmosphere.

Propagation boxes have much more controlled conditions, with no direct sunlight and a stable and warm atmosphere. Some boxes have bottom heating as well. Generally, you don't need to water cuttings very much, other than not letting the soil get too dry. In fact, some people recommend not wetting the cuttings at all as the most common problem is rotting of cuttings. I suggest that you allow the cutting box to dry out a little by leaving the lid off for a day or so. It is always tricky getting some heat into the box but not too much and that's why professionals use underfloor heating that can be accurately regulated.

Why We Need One

From Jan

Cuttings should be protected from the rain, but you don't need a cutting frame for that - a veranda can do it. Important things that the cutting frame does include:

- keeping the foliage in a humid atmosphere
- protecting the cuttings from breezes, snails, possums etc
- keeping the propagation mix damp so that the cutting stems are always damp and when small roots form they have ready access to water. This is the role of the sand bed.
- letting in the light so the cuttings don't starve. (So the box and lid should be transparent.)

Extra warmth is usually only significant if the cutting frame gets direct sun, and this can be bad. It's easy to cook your cuttings as the season changes and shady areas become sunny.

A bit of condensation on the underside of the lid is good. In my experience even quite a lot of condensation is often not a problem. If you think the condensation is cutting out too much light, either prop the lid up a little for a while till it clears and then replace the lid, or shake the water off the lid and put it back on. It's not usually a good idea to leave the lid off.

Have a look at your cuttings - if the leaves are very wet then leave the lid propped open for a while. If they are going mouldy, carefully pull out and discard the mouldy cuttings and put a small spacer between the lid and the box to give a little air gap.

However, cuttings of different plants can differ in their preferences. Some cuttings don't like a lot of humidity, others will love it. If you're growing hairy cuttings you may want to water only the sand, not spray the cuttings. And if you do spray, you want coarse not fine droplets so they drip off rather than staying on the leaves.

Don't worry if a biofilm appears on the surface of the sand bed after a few months.

Growing Things in Your Kit

From Graham

The two most common methods of plant propagation are growing on from seeds or from cuttings. Both methods are suitable for native plants although generally some families respond better to one technique or the other. Note that it is illegal to collect seed from plants in national parks and reserves without a permit. Therefore, seed can only normally be collected from plants in gardens or seed can be purchased from licensed collectors.

You can also **get seeds** for the cost of a stamp, from our sister organisation in Victoria:

<https://resources.austplants.com.au/stories/updated-seed-list-from-aps-vic/>

Growing from Seed

The **growing medium** is important and there are many recipes. Basically, a mixture should be free draining but still retain some moisture. Propagation mixes can be purchased in nurseries but the common ingredients are washed sand, vermiculite and peat moss.

Some seed requires **pre treatment** to mimic conditions in the wild such as placing acacia seeds in hot water for 24 hours before planting out. Many require soaking with smoke water to simulate the conditions post fire and others might need to be placed in a fridge for a few weeks.

Fill a small pot with your propagation mixture and gently tap down to remove any obvious air bubbles. Gently water and then place the seed on the surface if small or larger seeds should be buried to about the same depth as the size of the seed.

Keep pot moist but don't over water. Some people put the seed pot into another container with some water so that the propagation pot sits in about 1cm of water. The seed should be kept in a warm but not hot area, sometimes window sills are successful but perhaps not in summer.

Monitor the pot and once the seedlings are about 1-2 cm high soak the pot in water and gently remove the seedlings and replot into tube stock or similar filled with standard native potting mix.

You will probably have more failures than success and you might need to refine your methods but it can be very rewarding. This method is good for growing large numbers of plants.

Growing from Cuttings

Growing from cuttings is easier as you can acquire cutting material relatively easily.

A similar potting mix to the seed mix is OK but you need to watch the moisture levels as excessive watering or high humidity will cause the cuttings to rot. Cuttings need to be about 8-10cm long and should have a diameter of around 2-3mm. Remove all the flowers and most of the leaves but leave a couple. There are a number of rooting hormone materials available which seem to improve the success rate.

Once ready to go, prepare the cuttings, cut a small chamfer off the bottom of the cutting and place in water. Then dip the cutting into the hormone powder or liquid and place in a preformed hole in the propagation pot. Gently, press the soil down around the cuttings and water.

Cuttings should be left in a **glass house like area** where they get plenty of light but not direct sunlight and are **sheltered from wind**. A simple glass house is a plastic soft drink bottle that is cut almost in half but still joined so that the top is connected to the base by a hinge. A couple of small holes should also be made in the base. Fill the base with potting mix and gently water before adding the cuttings. Once the cuttings are in the bottle, close the bottle and attach to the base with a piece of sticky material such as masking tape. Leave the lid on. Monitor the setup regularly and water at maybe 2 to 3 day intervals.

Once the cuttings strike, you will probably see roots in the base of the bottle or the cutting is growing new leaves. Gently remove the cuttings and replot similarly to the seed growing method.

Some native families are very easy and novices should practice on these initially. Easily propagated families are westringias, prostantheras and goodenias.

Sometimes these methods do not work for often unknown reasons. This summer I have had very low success raising plants from both seeds and cuttings and suspect the high humidity might have caused problems. I'll keep on trying.

Best of luck.

Other Sources of Advice:

Gardening Australia <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s63iGkn8dpY>

<https://www.austplants.com.au/Central-Coast-Resources> scroll down about half way to find articles on propagating. This includes suggestions for plants that work well.

<https://www.austplants.com.au/Sutherland-Resources> A quick overview of propagating plants from seeds and cuttings by Ron Stevens, a former member of the Group.

<http://anpsa.org.au/plant-propagation/> quite detailed advice on propagating from seeds and cuttings. Select the relevant link.

Share your favourite sources on our new Facebook Group.

NEIGHBOURHOOD NEWS

There is a lot happening in our patch, with community groups and local councils being active in promoting native plants. My plan is to feature a local group or event each month. I welcome contributions - stories about your other favourite groups.

Bankstown Bushland Society Talk

The Bankstown Bushland Society have been in operation since 1988 They have just published their 100th quarterly newsletter. From that publication:

"Today in Bankstown, after two centuries of modern settlement, we are left with a mere 2% of the natural vegetation cover. The original vegetation here, with its many different soil and forest types, was among the most diverse of any part of the eastern coastline."

They are both a local advocacy group to protect what is left and bush regeneration group to restore some of the remnants.

Topic – "**The Flora & Wildlife of Cumberland Plain Grassy Meadows - Sydney's forgotten ecosystem**" – a talk by Peter Ridgeway, hosted by Bankstown Bushland Society (BBS) on **Wednesday 20th April at 7 pm**, at *Gardens on Forest*, 764 Forest Road, Peakhurst.

Here is a summary from Peter:

Chain-o-Pond Meadows are one of the least studied of our native ecosystems - and one of the most fascinating. The name 'Meadow' specifically refers to these ecosystems being treeless ground within a timbered setting of surrounding forest or woodland, distinguishing these ecosystems from Riparian Plains or cold-climate grasslands.

Examples within the Cumberland Plain are very different from Chain-o-Pond Meadows elsewhere. In particular, the examples in the Western Tablelands (such as Neville State Forest near Bathurst) and other tableland areas are dominated often exclusively by *Poa labillardieri* or *Poa sieberiana*; species almost entirely absent from Cumberland Plain meadows.

Just three marginally intact examples of this ecosystem remain in the Cumberland Plain - at Shanes Park, Elizabeth Macarthur Agricultural Institute (Menangle) and on military land at Moorebank. Colonial accounts describe the Menangle Meadows as grass dominated (which species remains a matter of considerable debate) but all examples remaining today are forb dominated.

[A forb or phorb is a herbaceous flowering plant that is not a grass, sedge, or rush. The term is used in biology and in vegetation ecology, especially in relation to grasslands and understory. Typically, these are dicots without woody stems. [from Wikipedia, Ed]]

Common plants include Spreading Sneezeweed *Centipeda minima*, Native Buttercup *Ranunculus plebeius*, Slender Bindweed *Polymeria calycina*, Jersey Cudweed *Pseudognaphalium (Helichrysum) luteoalbum*, Meadow Star *Isotoma fluvialis*, *Eclipta platyglossa* and Meadow Grass *Microlaena stipoides*. Sedges and rushes are occasional to absent.

The Cumberland Chain-o-Pond Meadows are not formally described and not recognised in the NSW Plant Community Types/Biodiversity Assessment Methodology. Conservation and restoration activity is consequentially mandated to revegetate these systems with Riverflat Forest canopy species. The importance of working toward formal recognition of the Cumberland Chain-o-Pond Meadows was discussed and further botanical studies encouraged.



Figure 12 *Centipeda minima*



Figure 7 *Ranunculus plebeius*



Figure 11 *Polymeria calycina*



Figure 10 *Pseudognaphalium luteoalbum*



Figure 9 *Eclipta platyglossa*



Figure 8 *Isotoma fluvialis*

The Cumberland Plain is way out of our patch – west of the Nepean, so why am I making a big deal out of this? Well, the geology that produces these meadows also occurred in the **Inner West**. If your garden is on **clay & nothing will grow**, join the club. It seems that my clay soil has been churned up by a dairy & has about 30 cm of diggable soil on top of impermeable clay. Rainforest plants will grow in it but not the original plants. They choke or drown. If I add sand to the top soil, maybe I can have a flowering meadow full of ‘weeds’ instead of lawn. **Anyone want to join me in this experiment?**

RANDOM JOTTINGS

These are items of general interest found on the World Wide Web. All contributions for future editions gratefully accepted.

Our Facebook Group

Thanks to Andrew who has set up a Facebook Group for us. It is a private group, so you have to be admitted by the Administrator. Click on the link & ask to join. Andrew will welcome you to the group.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1328674687627886/>

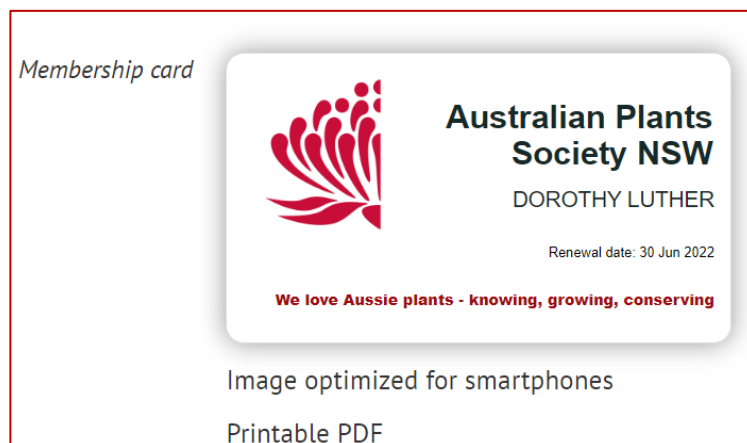
Keep an eye on the Facebook Group as we'll post events regularly. We'll also use it to post updates such as cancellations or contingency plans for our meetings.

Let's all use it to share updates on our propagating & gardening successes.

Membership Card

Your APS membership card gives you discounts at a number of native plant nurseries:

<https://resources.austplants.com.au/information/buying-native-plants-and-seeds/>



You can print your membership card or put it on your mobile phone from your membership page on the web site. You need to log in for this. Then select the menu items 'About Us', 'Membership', 'Renew' in sequence to display your membership card & details.

Click on 'Image optimized for smartphones' to download your card as a .png file, or click on 'Printable PDF' to download a

paper form where you can cut out your card with either square or rounded corners. This is useful to put into a name tag holder for meetings. We have name tag holders available for this.



Figure 13 *Eucalyptus sideroxylon* – tree & flowers

CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Newsletters Received – April

The full text of these newsletters is available from the APS website, on the District Group pages – usually under ‘Resources’.

Native Plants for NSW – April 2022

The monthly e-newsletter of the Australian Plants Society NSW, available at

<https://resources.austplants.com.au/newsletters-journals/monthly-enewsletter/>

Which Plants Where <https://www.whichplantwhere.com.au/> an online database of plants that you can search by postcode to find out which plants will be most hardy for your area. Website not launched yet.

Australian Plants Society, Newcastle NSW Group - Newsletter April 2022

visit to the Melton Botanic Garden, which is about 25km SW of Sunbury, Victoria.

Australian Plants Society, South East NSW Group - Newsletter April 2022

Sand dune garden & sustainable home visit; post fire regeneration reports

Australian Plants Society, Sutherland NSW Group - Newsletter April 2022

Preserving our tree hollows - Medium to large hollows can take over 200 years to produce.

Australian Plants Society, Northern Beaches NSW Group - Newsletter April 2022

illustrated talk by William 'Bill' Dobson on east coast orchids and their locations.

Message from Glenda Browne, the APS email manager:

Applications Wanted for Friends of Grasslands 2022 Grassy Ecosystem Grants

Friends of Grasslands (FoG) is again offering a small number of grants of up to \$1500 each in 2022 to support projects that promote investment in the understanding, conservation and management of native grassy ecosystems. Any individual or organisation can apply.

Information for applicants and the 2022 Application Form are available from FoG's Grants webpage at <https://www.fog.org.au/supportedprojects.htm>.

Closing date for applications is Friday 13 May 2022. Applicants are generally notified of the outcomes of their applications within six to eight weeks of the closing date.

For further information, registration of interest, or discussion of potential proposals please contact FoG at supportedprojects@fog.org.au.

For an overview of who we are, how we operate, and the scope of our activities check out our recent annual reports at <http://www.fog.org.au/AGMs.htm>.

COMING EVENTS

For details of coming district group events, please see the APS NSW website at <http://austplants.com.au/calendar>

Wednesday 4th May from 10:30am	Harbour Georges River Group meeting - ceremonial planting day at Sylvan Grove, Picnic Point
Saturday 14 May, 2 pm	Menai Wildflower Group meeting, Illawong Fire Station Peter Knight - subject to be confirmed.
Wed, 18 May	Sutherland Group meeting, Gymea Community Centre, 39 Gymea Bay Rd, Gymea
Saturday 21 May, from 10 am AGM at 1 pm	APS NSW Quarterly gathering and AGM hosted by Parramatta and Hills Group at Cherrybrook https://www.austplants.com.au/event-4549816?CalendarViewType=1&SelectedDate=5/28/2022
Monday 23rd May 7.30 pm	Oatley Flora and Fauna Conservation Society Meeting – Uniting Church Hall, corner of Letitia and Frederick Streets, Oatley Swapan Paul (Wetland Manager, SOPA) Ecology and sustainable management of mangroves.



Chorizema cordatum



Coronidium elatum

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<https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River>

