



HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER Group of APS NSW NEWSLETTER – April 2023

NEXT HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER EVENT:

Sunday 7th May, 10 am

Sydney Park Tour

Join our exploration of

the Wetlands, the AIDS Memorial Grove and

Sydney Park Farm and Orchard

meet at the Kiosk at 10am

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

Welcome to the April 2023 edition of the APS Harbour Georges River Group Newsletter.

As usual, we have a report on our last meeting and information about our next meeting.

There is quite a lot happening in the bush care projects in our patch – chances to write to a pollie and to get your hands dirty in between gardening efforts. Autumn seems to be a time for little blue flowers, with *Commelina cyanea* growing everywhere.

Looking forward to seeing you at our next event at Sydney Park, which is dog friendly too.

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>

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1 *Commelina cyanea* in flower

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

I hope you all enjoyed the Easter period and were able to catch up with family and friends. The last meeting we had at Burwood RSL was a great success. Having a meal before the meeting then followed by members talking about themselves and their interests was a great way to get to know each other. Dorothy giving an overview of APS helps us understand the Society as a whole and how it works. Thanks to all who contributed to the success of the evening.

I entered arrangements for the Royal Easter Show with the Sutherland group, as I have been doing for many years. Joan Zande (Sutherland) received a Championship ribbon for her arrangement of fruits, berries and foliage. Congratulations Joan. I received a first & third from my five entries.

The management of the judging was very disappointing this year, for when I finally left at 1:00 pm the certificates still had not been put out. This lost the fun of it all and the photos that were usually taken. There is a new group organising the event and it's not as user friendly.

Looking forward to seeing you all at our next event on Sunday 7/5/23 at Sydney Park.

Thank you all for your support & warmest regards to you all.

Marie O'Connor. President HGR APS NSW.



3 Third for my berries, fruit and seeds arrangement



2 First for my Grevillea arrangement

NEXT MEETING

Sydney Park Tour, Sunday 7th May, from 10 am

Thanks to Karen, who is organising the walk, for this informative introduction.

Walk through Sydney Park, Sunday 7 May 2023



Sydney Park, St Peters, is a popular park, especially on the weekends, so parking may not be easy. St Peters railway station is opposite the park or, if arriving at Newtown Station, you can catch the 422 or 370 bus down King St to Sydney Park Road.

The City of Sydney has a good website of Sydney Park. Here is a link to the history of the park:

<https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/histories-local-parks-playgrounds/history-sydney-park>

Let's meet at the **Kiosk at 10am**. To find the Kiosk, walk through the chimney area, turn right, walk past the children's park and the Kiosk is straight ahead. We will

explore three areas: **the Wetlands, the AIDS memorial Grove and Sydney Park Farm and Orchard.**

1. The Wetlands. We will walk in a clockwise direction around the Wetlands. There are lots of areas planted with natives, including *Lomandras*, *Dianellas*, *Themeda triangia*, *Goodenia ovata* and *Melaleucas*. There are information boards on the way describing how the Wetlands recycle stormwater, the importance of the microbats and the abundance of birdlife. We will aim to get back to the Kiosk **after about an hour** so you can enjoy a coffee and snack and have a chat.



2. AIDS Memorial Grove. There is a short walk from the Kiosk up a hill where you have a good view of the park. This leads to the Grove.

3. Sydney City Farm and Orchard. From the Grove, there is an easy walk to the Farm and Orchard.

From here we can wander back to the carpark or King St where you can hop on a bus or take the train. Some may like to walk up King St and explore the Newtown Garden Market (538 King St) on the way to Newtown Station.

If you would like to join us, the contact number is **043 252 7737** (a text preferred). Thanks. Karen

LAST MEETING

Members Night at Burwood RSL

Many thanks to those who volunteered to speak at the members night. It was generally voted a very good & interesting event. Also, thanks to Liz for organising the event, Dorothy for bringing a laptop & Peter for driving the technology.

Running Order:

- Marie O'Connor – introduction & Membership statistics
- Dorothy Luther - Outline of how APS works, using the slide set that Heather Miles prepared, which goes thru the different parts of the organisation.
- Karen Fong about her volunteer work at the Marrickville Community Nursery and Royal Botanic Gardens.
- Andrew Sinclair on his role at Sydney University and the garden he is creating in Botany.
- James Middleton on Australian plants related to his work as a garden designer.
- Chris King on her trip to the Macquarie Marshes and the wonders of *Azolla* species.
- Ashlie Stevenson on her horticultural experiences, especially at Sylvan Grove.
- Liz Cameron on plant names and families.
- Plant table

These speakers kindly provided some notes on their talks.

From Karen Fong - My volunteer work with plants

Last year I started volunteering with the 'Helping Hands' program once a month at the *Royal Botanic Gardens* in Sydney. As I often enjoy walking in the Gardens, it's great to find the garden beds I helped to maintain. Although the plants are not all Australian natives, last month we helped the horticulturalist weed and mulch in the *Cadi Jam Ora Garden* beds, which contain natives such as *Xanthorrhoea* spp. (Grass Trees).

My regular weekly gig is at the Marrickville Community Nursery. The nursery propagates local native plants for the reserves and parks around the Inner West and is a great place for members of the public to pick up a cheap native plant. Jobs I do regularly include pot washing (we recycle pots), potting up seedlings, weeding around plants we potted up a few weeks previously and sowing seeds. I have learnt the importance of clearly labelling plants with the provenance, collection date, date the seeds were sown, potting-up date and any other useful information such as the technique tried with hard-to-germinate seeds. Here is a picture of *Carex appressa*, which I potted up from a stock plant a few weeks back. *Carex* is the Latin name for 'sedge',



Figure 4 *Carex appressa*

Lastly, I have taken 'ownership' of a small patch of land which is close to a railway underpass in Ashfield, containing natives such as *Lomandra longifolia*, *Callistemons* and *Hardenbergia violacea*. I regularly weed around the natives and remove man-made rubbish. Volunteering with plants certainly gives me great satisfaction.

From James Middleton, on his Landscape Design Business

I spoke about the value to me of using native plants in ornamental gardens, in a design sense, because of their beauty and connection to this land, and my shock at how few native plants are used in Australian gardens.

I spoke of my interest not only in using plants from the place they originally grew, but also exploring the relationship between the plants, so that plants highlighted each other.

Chris King on the wonders of *Azolla* species

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azolla> (mosquito fern, duckweed fern, fairy moss, water fern) is a genus of seven species of aquatic ferns in the family *Salvinaceae*. They are extremely



reduced in form and specialized, looking nothing like other typical ferns but more resembling mosses. This genus grew so prolifically during the Eocene and absorbed such a large amount of carbon that it changed the planet's climate & over 800,000 years, created the oil deposits we are now burning up in 100 years.

Azolla is considered an invasive plant in wetlands, freshwater lakes and ditches. It can alter aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity substantially.

Notwithstanding, it is being used extensively as stock feed in some countries and its use in carbon

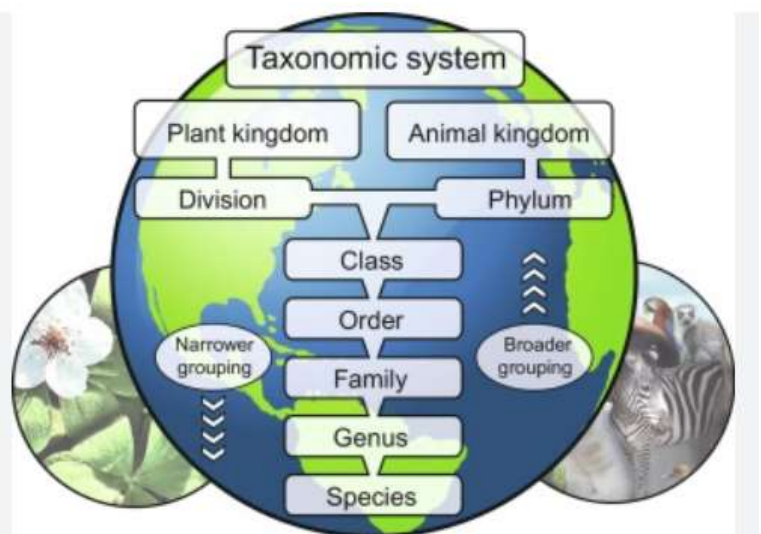
sequestration suggests growing some in your garden pond.

Liz Cameron on the Use of Botanical Names

A botanical name is a formal scientific name for plants, algae and fungi, that conforms to an international code. Its purpose is to have a single name for a particular plant or plant group, that is recognised and used worldwide.

A plant with a widespread distribution may have many different 'common' or everyday names, sometimes in different languages, but its botanical name identifies it universally. Even in languages with a different script such as Chinese, botanical names will be printed in English (Roman) script.

The species name of a plant consists of the genus written with an initial capital, followed by the specific epithet which is not capitalised. The name is derived from Latin and/or Greek and is italicised. The name may describe a plant's appearance eg the NSW Waratah's botanical name is *Telopea speciosissima*; *Telopea* (from the Greek *telopos*, meaning 'seen from afar') refers to the conspicuous flowers; *speciosissima* comes from the Latin *speciosus*, meaning 'showy' and *issimus*, 'most').



Plants that have been selected from naturally-occurring species and bred to have particular characteristics, may also carry a cultivar name. This is written in single quotes, is often non-Latin and it is not italicised eg *Banksia ericifolia* 'Little Eric'.

Sometimes we find familiar native plants have undergone a name change. This usually results from research (particularly on DNA) that demonstrates plants in different genera are more closely related than is obvious from their physical appearance. For example, in 2007 the genus *Dryandra* was merged into *Banksia* on the basis of extensive molecular and morphological evidence.

Mining the Membership List

OK, so we've been nosy – not as nosy as Facebook or even Woolworths, but we do poke around in the membership database to see what we can find out about you. Since we have so many new members, I thought it useful to see what their interests are. This is the result of a rainy day:

Summary of interests expressed when joining, membership as at March 2023:

Propagation	7
Growing	17
Garden design	13
Rare & Endangered plants	13
Conservation/ Bush Care	11
Local projects & parks	10
plant Identification	12
Research	7
Organising events	4
PR & Marketing	1
Writing stories	4
Writing plant profiles	9

The membership system doesn't clarify whether 'Garden design' means "I know about garden design" or "I would like to learn about it" or "I would like someone to come & design my garden". What did you mean when you ticked the box?

GROUP NEWS

Planning for 2023

Our next committee meeting will be on Wed 24th May 2023, from 7:30 pm, via Zoom. We hope to finalise the activities for the rest of 2023. If you have any suggestions or would like to attend the meeting or help with organising events, please contact Dorothy on dlutherau@yahoo.com.au to receive the meeting agenda & Zoom link.

Our Library

The library is contained in two large wooden cupboards that have been moved to Dorothy's home.

Dorothy has compiled an Excel list of the publications, which is posted in the Members' section of the HGR website. <https://www.austplants.com.au/sys/website/?pageId=18256>

You have to log in to see the list, so it is only available to members of the Harbour Georges River group. If you have problems signing in, contact the APS NSW membership officer, Merle Thompson on merleaps@bigpond.com

Please have a look at the list, <https://www.austplants.com.au/sys/website/?pageId=18256> borrow a book and write a few notes about it, so we know how useful it is. You borrow a book by sending an email to Dorothy, at dlutherau@yahoo.com.au and the book will be delivered to the next meeting. Or you can make an appointment to look at the library. Again, email for a suitable time & the address.

Some Content

The Society for Growing Australian Plants (SGAP) NSW created a set of 21 leaflets called "Introducing Native Plants". Each is A5, 4 sided, covering some aspect of native plants, obviously intended for beginner native plant gardeners. We have 4 sets in the library. I have scanned the 5 leaflets dealing with plants for different habitats – clay soil, shady areas, coastal gardens, cottage gardens, birds in gardens. Other leaflets deal with types of native plant – grasses, ferns, etc and the more common species such as Banksias, Grevilleas & Wattles.

I'll put the habitats document on our web site with the library list.

Another Book

This came via the APS newsletter network.

In late May this year, ahead of World Environment Day, Melbourne University Press will release a book called, ***What Birdo is that? A Field Guide to Bird-people*** by Libby Robin.

What Birdo is That? explores the interplay between knowing about birds and caring about their future. Birds and their people can be funny, intriguing and surprising. This book tells some of the back-stories from across centuries. It builds to a crescendo in the 21st century where global warming and biodiversity loss have become existential threats to life on Earth. It is of interest to gardeners because there is quite a bit about gardening for birds.

Royal Easter Show



5 Joan Zande from Sutherland group at the Easter Show with a Champion ribbon

Sydney Royal Flower & Garden Show - Australian Plants Competition

Every year, members of APS NSW enter their best native plant arrangements in this hotly contested event. There are several categories, from single flower species to complex arrangements involving berries & leaves as well.

Our president, Marie once again contributed to the APS NSW Sutherland Group's entry. The judging and display were held on Friday 14th and Saturday 15th April.

Congratulations to Marie, and to Joan Zande from Menai group for their wins.

APS NSW AGM & Quarterly Gathering

Sat 20th May - 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM - hosted by Central Coast

<https://www.austplants.com.au/event-4549820>

Commencing at 9.30am with an easy stroll in Brisbane Water National Park OR visit the Wholesale Native Nursery of Olga Blacha and Jonathan Steed.

Following that, at 1pm is the AGM, at Phillip House, 21 Old Mt. Penang Rd Kariong

From 1.30pm, Olga will be sharing her perspectives on 'Achieving a new civic Australian style garden'.

Afternoon tea, plant sales and the chance to catchup with like-minded folks. All welcome. \$5/10 pp payable on entry.

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.

Jennifer St Banksia Scrub

Following our letter to Rockdale Council about this, Andrew has received a request for an interview from a UNSW Media student. As part of an assignment, he is writing a news story about the implications of the Jennifer Street residential complex on native bushland, particularly the Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub. The resulting story will be considered for the publicly facing UNSW student publication, Newsworthy.

You never know where action is going to come from.

Wolli Creek Bushcare

Volunteers, with a wide array of backgrounds, knowledge, and experience attend regular monthly work sessions in each of six areas. Some attend more than one session of 3 1/2 hours a month. Some have lots of knowledge and skills, but most are learning on the job, guided by our supervisors.

Numbers of volunteers vary a lot, but our most recent group, working at Turrella Reserve, is in need of additional helpers. This site started up in November 2022 around the dipping pond in Turrella Reserve, 9 am on the 4th Thursday of each month.

To volunteer, contact Peter Semple, co-ordinator on bushcare@wollicreek.org.au
Mobile 0411 021 440.


Greenway Progress

The IWEG people are asking us to once again show our support in keeping the Green in the GreenWay by putting in a submission in the Inner West Council's "Your say". It doesn't need to be long. Speaking from your heart is best. <https://yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/> & scroll down to 'Greenway missing links'.

Here are some talking points you might like to consider.

Maintaining Bio-diversity - A GreenWay not a Grey Way

- Meetings to be held on site with Bushcare representatives, Urban Ecology and Gartner Rose to try and save as much of the plantings as possible.
- A new Urban ecology officer be appointed to solely look after the GreenWay ensuring bio-diversity is protected and enhanced. Current staff are far too over committed to take on extra duties
- The GreenWay needs a complex variety of plants, shrubs and trees to improve bio-diversity. We need plants from STIF, Sandstone Freshwater and Coastal Swamp communities. We need at least 60 species from each community. For the Arlington Grove Complex in Grove St Dulwich Hill, Council required them to plant 50 different species in their native garden adjoining the GreenWay.
- The contractor employed to plant and maintain the new plantings to hold relevant bushcare/bush regeneration qualifications. Weeding to be done by hand to ensure native grasses and small ground covers are not removed by mistake. Regular audits are conducted on this work. Contracts be put in place for maintenance of the native vegetation in perpetuity.
- Seeking assurances that if funds run low, the budget for revegetation will not be cut



GreenWay.
Connecting the Cooks River to Iron Cove

When completed in 2025, the GreenWay will traverse the Inner West, from the Cooks River to Iron Cove, with beautiful parks and natural areas, sporting facilities and public artworks.


This once in a generation project will positively change the Inner West forever with a continuous active transport, biodiversity and public art corridor.

The GreenWay concept designs benefited from extensive community consultation and were finalised in 2020.

Now the GreenWay draft design is available for the community to see. Construction is scheduled to start in August 2023 and we're seeking community feedback to ensure we have been true to the Masterplan.

You can view the draft detailed design at yoursay.innerwest.nsw.gov.au/greenway

Or scan the QR code to visit the GreenWay page to find out more.



Isn't it good that we're going to tour the Greenway in July, before the Inner West Council trash all the years of patient bush care & plant kangaroo paws.

RANDOM JOTTINGS

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

Health Benefits of Green Space

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/apr/04/prescribed-time-in-nature-linked-to-improvements-in-anxiety-depression-and-blood-pressure>

The impacts and effectiveness of nature prescribing in different countries, looking at 92 studies in which participants spent time engaging with nature in various capacities.

The most frequently recommended activities were walking in nature (46% of all programs), farming or gardening (29%) and mindfulness exercises (29%). Common settings were forests and nature reserves (35% of prescriptions), parks (28%) and community or home gardens (16%).

Research on nearly 47,000 Australians has previously found that in urban areas, **30% green space or tree canopy cover** was beneficial to health, lowering the odds of experiencing diabetes and psychological distress.

Fairy Circles in the Desert

<https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/apr/04/mystery-of-australian-desert-fairy-circles-may-be-solved-thanks-to-indigenous-knowledge>

Indigenous knowledge may have helped solve the scientific mystery of how polka-dot “fairy circles” occur in Australian deserts. The bare circular patches were first recorded by scientists in Africa in the 1970s, sparking a global debate about the phenomenon.

Ethnoecologist Fiona Walsh said scientists had concluded they came about from plants competing for water and nutrients. But traditional owners have a different hypothesis for the circles that are between two and 12 metres in diameter.

More Forests to Worry About

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/apr/19/worlds-at-risk-kelp-forests-provide-billions-of-dollars-in-benefits-study-shows>

Kelp is like a plant – it is photosynthetic and has structures that look like roots (the kelp holdfast), stems (the stipe) and leaves (blades) – but kelp and other algae belong to a separate kingdom of life from plants, called protists. Kelp forms giant underwater forests that are as important to the planet as our land-based forests.



CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

Newsletters Received – April

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

Australian Plants Society, Newcastle Group - Newsletter April/ May 2023

A very enthusiastic new president; Some rainforest plants of the Sea Acres National Park at Port Macquarie; participating in the 'Great Southern BioBlitz', held over three days at the end of October.

Australian Plants Society, Hunter Valley Group - Newsletter April 2023

Science in the Garden - Apical Dominance & why tip pruning is necessary for bushy growth. Garden plants flowering heavily; Hunter Valley Native Plant *Eremophila debilis* Winter Apple

Australian Plants Society, Sutherland Group - Newsletter April 2023

Flying Foxes – A crash course in their Conservation and Management; attempting to propagate mistletoe from seed. Reports from the Quarterly Gathering at Bundeena; *Dendrobium speciosum*: experiences growing rock orchids

Australian Plants Society, Northern Beaches Group - Newsletter April 2023

February visit to ‘plants in peril’ at the Royal Botanic Garden, Sydney – a surprising number are relatives or sub species of well-known plants. Visit to Cicada Glen Nursery's gardens. The battle to save Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub, waged by Peter Cooley, CEO of Indigigrow Nursery.

Other Groups Newsletters

We have begun to swap newsletters with other environmental groups in the Harbour Georges River area. Links to their web sites are provided where available.

Burrendong Arboretum Quarterly newsletter, April 2023

AGM – financial woes. A quick overview of geology – rock types. A visit to the Nandewar Range, west of Armidale, with spectacular volcanic rock formations.

National Parks & Wildlife Service, ‘Naturescapes’ April 2023

NPWS recently secured Thurloo Downs, a massive 437,394 hectares of land in far north-west NSW, making it the largest acquisition of land for national parks in NSW history. Thurloo Downs fills essential gaps in the national park estate and will help protect important habitat for around 50 threatened species.

A new digital experience at Bobbin Head, in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, showcases the incredible natural and Aboriginal cultural heritage of the area. Head out on the Mangrove

Boardwalk and Gibberagong Track and follow the signage to touch, smell and feel the environment.



6 *Scaevola aemula*

COMING EVENTS

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

Sun 7th May 10 am	APS HGR tour of Sydney Park. Contact Karen on 043 252 7737 (a text preferred) for details and to RSVP.
Wed, 17 May, from 7:00 pm	Sutherland Group Meeting at Gynea Community Hall. Samantha Newton on Bush tucker plants and gardening responsibly.
Sat 20th May - 9:30 AM - 3:30 PM	APS NSW AGM & Quarterly Gathering - hosted by Central Coast at Phillip House, 21 Old Mt. Penang Rd, Kariong https://www.austplants.com.au/event-4549820
Wed 24th May, from 7:30 pm	APS HGR committee meeting, via Zoom

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



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