



## HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER Group of APS NSW NEWSLETTER – January 2024

**NEXT HARBOUR GEORGES RIVER EVENT:**

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February, 6 pm for dinner**

**Plants of the Eastern Suburbs**

**With one of our Members, Greg Potter**

**Burwood RSL Club, 96 Shaftesbury Road Burwood.**

**Presentation at 7:30 pm**

Please RSVP to Liz on [elsmere02@gmail.com](mailto:elsmere02@gmail.com) to confirm you are attending.

**VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME**

Welcome to the January 2024 edition of the APS Harbour Georges River Group Newsletter. I hope you have had a good break and you and your gardens are surviving the wettest El Nino on record.

A long cartoon this month. We need to plant more trees & shrubs & understory, everywhere we can. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/picture/2024/jan/10/a-love-letter-to-neighbourhood-trees>

The usual neighbourhood gossip as well as an overview of our group's services to members.  
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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Bark pattern, from a friend on her phone, and is enjoying things.



who has just got a macro lens photographing tiny beautiful

## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

APS President's Report

President's Report

I hope you all had a happy Christmas and enjoyed getting outdoors at some stage even if the weather was a bit challenging. We did a lot of travelling over the last couple of weeks and were a bit surprised by the condition of the country in NSW. Up north around Glen Innes it was quite dry and graziers were buying food for their stock, while around Mudgee the country was also dry. In contrast the Southern Highlands were in good condition with Lake George very full. The rainfall pattern has been very patchy with some areas receiving good rains while others are in poor condition.

During early January, we spent a very pleasant week at Charlotte Pass in the Snowy Mountains and even though this is a regular event for us we are never disappointed with the wildflowers. The flowers were abundant and combined with the stunning scenery and the lovely mild climate, it made it hard to leave and return home to hot and humid weather. The only disappointing aspect of the Snowy's is the slow long-term recovery of the snow gums after 2003 bushfires. While the lower elevation bushland has recovered, it is not the same at high altitudes with large areas of snow gums with tall white trunks but new growth that is only 2-3m high. In the high country with its cool to cold climate the growing season is only short and therefore it will take many years for the snow gums to recover. Fortunately, the snow gums around Charlotte Pass village were unaffected by the fires and so we can still appreciate the wonderful alpine environment in a pristine state with beautiful flame robins flitting about and lots of very interesting insects and other organisms. I would highly recommend a visit to the Snowy Mountains in summer.

Looking forward to another big year for our group with plenty of interesting talks and outings planned.

Graham Fry

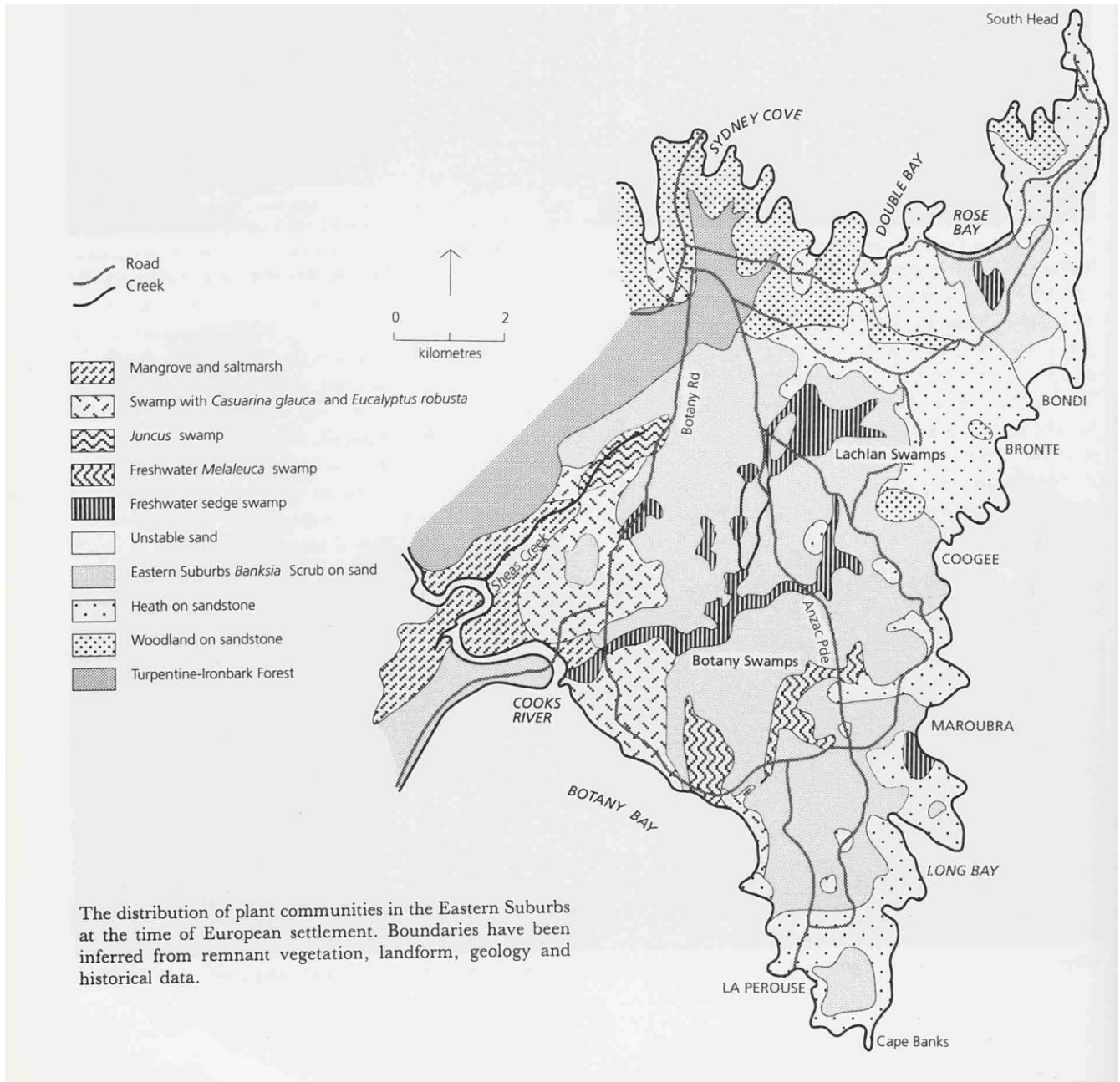
President HGR APS



## NEXT MEETING

### Plants of the Eastern Suburbs, Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> February from 6 pm

The geology & hence soil types & habitats of the Eastern Suburbs is quite complex, as is the rest of 'Our Patch'. Plant communities range from woodland on sandstone (Nielsen Park) to heath on sandstone and Eastern Suburbs Banksia scrub on sand to freshwater sedge swamps at Maroubra.



1 From Benson, D. et al, 'Taken For Granted - The Bushland Sydney and its Suburbs', Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney

### From Greg Potter

I'll quickly cover some of the common plants we see throughout our region, then talk about the more interesting things like the endangered plants and the less common plants that you

get an opportunity to see in the Eastern part of our patch. Give a bit more understanding of what is around.

I'll focus on flora in the larger parks like Nielsen Park, Cooper Park, Parsley Bay, and Gap Park/ South Head. We have some amazing parks in Woollahra. There are also smaller parks in the area like Trumper Park, Vauclose House and Fred Hollows Reserve further south, but they don't add much in terms of local flora that would interest the audience.

There are a lot of interesting rainforest plants in Cooper Park, Parsley Bay and Gap Park, and Nielsen Park has an interesting mix of coastal plants, many of which are gone from elsewhere in the area.

Many plants that might have formed the original forests in the area were actually reintroduced by regeneration rather than surviving through until now, so I'll avoid too much focus on what species are remnant/reintroduced and focus more on what interesting local flora people might see if they come here.

## LAST MEETING

### Christmas Party & AGM

Our Christmas meeting was held on Wed 13<sup>th</sup> December, from 6 pm, at the Clemton Park Uniting Church Hall, at 6 Dunkirk Avenue, Kingsgrove.

### Annual General Meeting

We held a short formal AGM, to report on the past year's activities and financial report, circulated to the membership by email on 20 Dec 2023, and posted on the Members Only section of our web site.

<b>Elected positions</b>	<b>Name</b>
President	Graham Fry
Vice-President	Vacant
Vice-President (Projects)	Dorothy Luther
Secretary	Liz Cameron
Treasurer	Sandra Rogers
<b>Appointed positions</b>	<b>Name</b>
Newsletter Editor	Dorothy Luther
Website Editor	Kerry Snelgrove
Membership Officer	Kerry Snelgrove
Publicity Officer incl. Facebook	Andrew Sinclair
Plant Table Recorder	Boyd Webster
Propagation Co-ordinator	Graham Fry
Program Co-ordinator	Vacant
Hospitality	Liz Cameron

## Fun and Games

We spent a short time playing a new card game that a team of members has been working away creating. A bit like a jig saw puzzle, the idea was to learn about native plants along the way. It was aimed at showcasing local Flora for newer members, so some of the long-term members found it unchallenging.

## Plant Table

Graham had a number of plant species for sale and Greg Potter also brought along some of his propagations to show off. Photos and notes by Greg.

<i>Leptospermum petersonii</i>	Lemon Scented Tea Tree
<i>Homalanthus populifolius</i>	Bleeding Heart
<b><i>Backhousia myrtifolia</i></b>	Cinnamon Myrtle
<b><i>Gmelina leichhardii</i></b>	White Beech

### ***Leptospermum petersonii***

This tea tree isn't a local but you see it a lot in gardens and forest around the Eastern Suburbs. (no photo)

### ***Gmelina leichhardii***

The White Beech was logged to near extinction over a lot of its natural range. It is endangered south of Sydney and somewhat rare north of Sydney. They may also have naturally occurred in Sydney, but these days you just see them as ornamental plantings in parks. (toothed leaved seedling that Greg is growing)



### ***Backhousia myrtifolia***

A nice local native. Cousin of the more well known *Backhousia citriodora* (lemon myrtle). Both have aromatic leaves that can be used in cooking.



## GROUP NEWS

### Plans for Next Year

Our **first Business Planning meeting** for the new year was held on **Wednesday 17th January 2024**, at 7:30 pm, via Zoom.

### Bob the Crayfish Planning Meeting Comic



After our name change, we realised we owned a much larger area of Sydney than before. So, we spent a couple of years exploring ‘Our Patch’. For an urban area, it has a surprising number of bush areas, most of them with a local group who care for it.

This year, with a change of leadership, we are turning to showcasing our members expertise with a series of presentations. As ‘Our Patch’ includes 3 major universities, we have a number of members with deep knowledge of some topic of interest.

The other major decision made was to not hold meetings in the months when there is an APS NSW Quarterly meeting. So, the program to date is:

Month	Day	Location	Event
February	Wed 7 <sup>th</sup>	Burwood RSL	Greg & Boyd on East Suburbs flora
March	Sat 9 <sup>th</sup>	Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden	Quarterly meeting 1, hosted by North Shore group
April	Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Burwood RSL	Andy on Desert plants?
May	Sat 18 <sup>th</sup>	Parramatta and Hills	Quarterly meeting 2 & AGM
June			
July			
August			
September	Sat 14 <sup>th</sup>	Oatley Uniting Church	Quarterly meeting 3, hosted by HGR
October	to 4 <sup>th</sup>	Melbourne	ANPSA Biennial conference
November	TBA	Armidale	The Annual weekend Get Together
December	TBA	Clemton Park church?	Christmas party

## Member Website

As an off shoot of the Hugh Stacy archive newsletter project, we also compiled an index of the major topics in each newsletter. The list is available from the Resources section of the web site. [https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River-Resources#newsletter\\_archive\\_index](https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River-Resources#newsletter_archive_index) It indexes all the newsletters from 2015, in reverse chronological order. If you want to access any of the ones that have been removed from the website, contact a committee member, who can send you a copy.

Our website has other information that may be of interest to both recent and long-standing members. The range of topics include:

1. Home
  - Map of the group catchment area with a list of LGAs
  - Summary of group aims and activities
  - Details of the next meeting or event
2. About Us
  - Brief history of the former East Hills Group and merger/renaming to HGR
3. Activities
  - The 2024 schedule of meetings and activities (work in progress)
4. Local Plants
  - Images of local flora to whet your appetite (photos by Karlo Taliana)
5. Resources
  - Places within our patch where you can explore, volunteer (bush care groups), or purchase local flora for your garden or balcony
  - Newsletters (most recent issue and archived editions)
6. Contact Us
  - Committee contact details
7. Members Only (use your APS NSW login to access this)
  - Library books owned by the group, who to contact, how to borrow
  - Bank account details
  - A limited number of Government contacts
  - Minutes of committee meetings since 2021
  - Opportunities for volunteering within the group, list of roles, who to contact

We invite you to visit the HGR website in the coming weeks. Is the site engaging and likely to attract new members? Can you find what you need? Have we included details that are relevant to your LGA? Constructive comments should be directed to our Webmaster.

Finally, are you interested in volunteering within the group? Please contact our President in the first instance.

Thanks very much to Phyllis Heggie for this summary.

## Member Library

Our group has inherited a library of over 60 books, which are available to members for loan. The list is published in the Members Only section of our web site (that is, you have to log in). We need volunteers to write short reviews of some of the books with a view to whether they are still of value. The review might include:

- general objectives of the book, eg from the cover blurb



- what quality of illustrations it has – black & white or colour photos (and what quality), line drawings, botanical illustrations
- is the terminology botanical or designed for the lay person
- does it just describe the plants or talk about habitat, growth and/ or propagation

Some of them have beautiful line drawings, and there are titles like “Conserving Biodiversity, Threats and Solutions”, “Missing Jigsaw Pieces, The Bushplants of the Cooks River Valley”, “Rare Bushland Plants of Western Sydney, 2nd Ed”.

To volunteer for this, contact Dorothy on [dlutherau@yahoo.com.au](mailto:dlutherau@yahoo.com.au) and I will bring the book to the next meeting.

There is also a set of 20 leaflets - An introduction to major plant types of NSW - which I have digitised. A soft copy is available on request.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

There is a lot happening in our patch, with community groups and local councils being active in promoting native plants. I welcome contributions - stories about your other favourite groups.

### **Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)**

The ACF is mainly a lobby group campaigning to protect nature. This includes working with First Nations people to learn the traditional ways and support their actions. As well as the professionals, ACF has a number of local volunteer groups who ‘Think Global, Act Local’ in their neighbourhoods, such as by lobbying local government. ACF support these groups with computer support, training in lobbying & leadership skills and access to media skills.

The Inner West group are running a project called “Rewilding the Inner West”. They held a planning meeting on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January to develop an action plan for 2024. This meeting was “specifically about how to be most impactful in working to increase tree canopy coverage across the inner west, so that every human and creature in our beautiful community can have access to nature!”

I’ll provide an update on the action plan in the next newsletter.

### **Book Launch - Brush Turkeys**

Launch of Ann Goth's book on living with Brush Turkeys - Five Dock Library Level 1/4-12 Garfield St, Five Dock, Thursday 8th February, 5.30 - 6.30 pm. Dr. Goth has a passion for nature’s wonders and aims to help our community better understand these birds. Dr Goth will also share tips for how to protect your gardens, what to look out for when seeing the birds in public, and how to track and report bird sightings.

Bookings essential. Book now at [bit.ly/anngoth](http://bit.ly/anngoth)

### **Unwin Green Street**

March Breakfast Meeting – Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> March - Wildlife, bush, plans for regeneration.

The irrepressible Lydia Feng is organising a gathering at her place, overlooking Wolli Creek and the patch of waste land she is trying to reclaim for a formal entry to Wolli Creek

Regional Park. She has invited some friends from Inner West Wires to join a breakfast gathering to discuss the possibility of releasing appropriate injured animals into the area. APS HGR members are invited to attend and enjoy the contrast of the eastern end of Wollri Creek Regional Park, the Green Street in the making, and the formal council plantings in Waterworth Park.

## RANDOM JOTTINGS

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

### The Basque Green Ring

‘People are proud of this green spirit of ours’: how a small Spanish city rejected cars. Decades ago, when many other European cities were building more road capacity, Vitoria-Gasteiz took a very different path. They call it the *anillo verde*, the green ring, a 30km series of parks and cycle lanes that encircle Vitoria-Gasteiz, the capital of the Basque region in northern Spain. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/dec/20/vitoria-gasteiz-spanish-city-rejected-cars>

Inevitably, some of these measures have been met with opposition, says Rodríguez (head of environmental policy), who argues it takes courage to implement sustainable policies.

However, not content to rest on its green laurels, the Basque capital is now helping to coordinate the NetZeroCities project, a network of 53 cities in 21 European countries which aims to create a total of 112 intelligent and climate-neutral cities by 2030.

### Are there any Australian Deciduous Native Trees?

[From the NCC newsletter, December 2023]

The two best known are the red cedar (*Toona ciliata*) and the white cedar (*Melia azedarach*). Both occur in subtropical rainforests of Queensland and NSW. In Tasmania there is the deciduous beech (*Nothofagus gunnii*). Many eucalypts of the tropical north are also deciduous, although not in winter and only for a short period before the wet season.

Some Australian trees can be partly deciduous - they may lose half or more of their foliage just prior to flowering. The best-known example is the Illawarra flame tree (*Brachychiton acerifolius*). It can also be observed on the silky oak (*Grevillea robusta*).

(With thanks to NCC member group [Australian Native Plants Society \(ANPSA\)](#) who have the answer to this and to many other frequently asked questions on their [website](#))

### The Good News on Climate Change

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2024/jan/02/hannah-ritchie-not-the-end-of-the-world-extract-climate-crisis>

“In my book, I look at realistic ways we can adapt the fields of energy, transport, food and construction to rein in climate change while improving human wellbeing at the same time. Another reason some climate scientists are less pessimistic is that they believe that things can change. Finally, the world has woken up to the reality of climate change and people are taking action. The climate scientists know change is possible because they’ve seen it happen. Against the odds, they’ve driven much of it.”

So we might make it to less than 2 degrees of warming yet. Also, we're actually using less energy than our grandparents because our technology is more efficient & much of it is generated by low polluting methods. Maybe 2024 will be a good year after all. But we still need to plant lots of trees & shrubs & ground covers.



Snowy Mountains scenes, photos by Graham Fry



Another of my friend's photos, although not with the macro lens this time.

A *Cymbidium suave*, growing wild in her bush patch near Newcastle.

*Cymbidium suave*, or Snake Orchid, is usually found in stumps and in forks of gum trees. Apparently, once the pods turn brown, the kernel can be eaten raw and has a similar taste to peanuts. The juice from the stems was once used as a glue and applied directly to wounds (particularly burns). [thanks to Ralph Cartwright for this information. See

<https://resources.austplants.com.au/stories/orchids-in-the-bush/> ]

## CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED

### Newsletters Received – December/ January

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

#### Australian Plants Society, Northern Beaches Group - Newsletter January/ February 2024

Thousands of our native plants have no public photographs available. Here's why that matters, and what is being done about it. Native raspberries, limes and geraniums: how did these curious plants end up in Australia?

#### Australian Plants Society, South East Group - Newsletter December 2023

Presentation on Australia’s Drumsticks (Isopogon) and Conebushes (Petrophile) – little known WA beauties. Both have some connection to South African species. A “Plant Swap”, instead of a direct sale, to control the crowds.

#### Australian Plants Society, South East Group - Newsletter January 2024

Eremophila Study group are active contributors to general knowledge about the genus and to the Study Group's research program, which now comprises three significant projects. Visit to a newly established Narooma garden.

### 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. Copies of newsletters are available from the editor on request for about a month.

#### National Parks & Wildlife Service – Naturescapes, December 2023

Koala population thriving at Narrandera

We’re monitoring a very special koala population at Narrandera - the descendants of the first ever koala translocation in NSW. In the 1970’s, 20 koalas were released at Murrumbidgee Valley Nature Reserve in a community initiative to re-establish the extinct colony. Our koala team continue to research this koala population 50 years later, with recent studies showing it is chlamydia-free, genetically diverse, and now numbering nearly 300!

#### Nature Conservation Council (NCC), 2023 Wrap Up

Some wins:

\* a commitment to establish the Great Koala National Park, after more than a decade of community campaigning.

BUT NCC analysis revealed the Forestry Corporation was logging forests with the highest known numbers of the endangered Southern Greater Glider. (they’re nocturnal, so don’t get counted in surveys).

- \* The passing of the Restoring our Rivers Bill gives hope to inland Australians and wildlife.
  - \* The closure of our two largest coal plants - Eraring in 2025 and Vales Point in 2028/9.
- And of course, much more work to be done.

#### Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), 2023 Wrap Up

Some wins:

- Stronger protections guarding our groundwater from gas fracking
- Scrapping 'pay to destroy' offsets under the Nature Repair Market, and
- Returning crucial water to the rivers, wetlands and wildlife of the Murray-Darling Basin.

#### Wolli Creek Preservation Society (WCPS) Bushcare

The weeds are loving the hot & rainy conditions but, overall, we seem to be keeping on top of them. The new Illoura planting is going well with some of the shrubs growing rapidly. The Jackson Place revegetation site has been cleared of vines and seems to be going well, so far.

#### Bankstown Bushland Society (BBS)

Bankstown Bushland Society are joining Wayne Keys and the Cumberland Nature Crew on some of their Next Stop Wildlife Walks. Most of these are out of our patch, across Georges River. They have had good reviews from attendees. Areas visited include Voyager Point, where Kath Wade found this beauty to photograph. The walks are advertised on their Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/bankstownbushlandsociety>



*2 Calochilus gracillimus (Late Beardie)*

## COMING EVENTS

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

Wed Feb 7 <sup>th</sup> at 6 pm, meeting at 7:30 pm	APS HGR meeting at Burwood RSL, 96 Shaftesbury Road Burwood, plants of the Eastern Suburbs
Sat 10th February, 10 am	Bush Food Garden Workshop with Narelle Happ, at Sydney Wildflower Nursery, 9 Veno St, Heathcote. Book via <a href="https://www.trybooking.com/CLDTW">https://www.trybooking.com/CLDTW</a>
Fri 1st March, 6pm – 8pm	The Bat Watch Picnic at Turrella Reserve, Wollie Creek Regional Park. Email <a href="mailto:bats@wollicreek.org.au">bats@wollicreek.org.au</a> . For more details
Sat 9th March	APS Quarterly meeting 1, hosted by North Shore group, at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden.
Saturday 25 <sup>th</sup> March	Unwin Green Street Breakfast Meeting at Lydia's place, 4/12 Unwin St, Earlwood. Wildlife, bush, plans for regeneration.

### EAST HILLS GROUP CONTACTS

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1328674687627886>  
<https://www.austplants.com.au/Harbour-Georges-River>

Our former president, Marie, with some of the entries in last year's Royal Easter Show, Flower and Garden Competition.

We wish her a speedy recovery, and many more years of arranging flowers to brighten the world.

