



APS EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER

NEXT EHG MEETING:

Meeting via Zoom, Wednesday 3rd November at 2 pm
Zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88168227873?pwd=c0hDeHpuZzFSL243ZDEwVExKT0hjQT09>

Members Day – short talks on a variety of topics

Send photos for the online display table to Dorothy by Tuesday

Hoping to see you all back again in December.

Stay safe and well until then

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

November 2021

Welcome to the November 2021 edition of the APS East Hills Group Newsletter.

This month's newsletter is looking back to some stories from Before Lockdown, just to remind you that there was such a time. We're also looking at some new projects that have come out of Lockdown. There is a summary of the very detailed report from our October meeting on urban trees and notice of the Christmas Party come AGM for December.

enjoy

Dorothy Luther, Editor

In the spirit of reconciliation, the APS East Hills 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.

<http://austplants.com.au/East-Hills>



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

Des and I hope you are enjoying the ability to meet with family and friends again and travel further enjoying the parks and ocean once more.

Our condolences to Graham Walters and family at the death of his wife Margaret recently in Bankstown Hospital. Liz Cameron presented him with a card from the group as well as an arrangement of flowers from both our gardens.

Graham and Margaret have been members of our group for many years and grown Australian natives in a succession of gardens. Their family has also been connected with EHG over a number of years. Margaret attended our Christmas gathering as recently as December 2019 when the Fossickers group sang for us; the Fossickers include Graham's and Margaret's grand-daughters Halcyon and Ruby and their friend Sophie (who spoke on urban trees at our October meeting).

We are looking forward to our get together at the Castle in Oatley Park for our final meeting of the year.

A big thanks to Dorothy for hosting the zoom meetings during the year. It has enabled us to continue being connected with and support each other as well as show how our gardens have changed with the seasons.

Since we can't have our beloved plant table in the flesh, can you please send photos to Dorothy (dlutherau@yahoo.com.au) by Tuesday evening. She will arrange them into a slide show and you can talk about them at the meeting. There will be time for socialising after this as usual, but BYO afternoon tea.

Stay safe and look after your well-being. Enjoy your gardens.

Warmest regards to all,

Marie O'Connor.

President, East Hills Group

NEXT MEETINGS

November 3rd

We were hoping to follow up Sophie's talk in October with one of her friends, Ruby Stevens, but we'll have to wait until next year for that as Ruby is off on a field trip. She will be talking about her PhD work on floral traits in Australian plant communities, and/or a citizen science project she is working on to engage local plant groups in threatened species assessments.

So we're having a members day, where we'll hear about some of our members special interests, more or less related to native plants.

- Dorothy will talk about the Wolli Creek bird survey analysis
- Jan and Dave will tell us about Wongaburra, their 'country estate' on the far south coast
- Marie will talk about some of her propagation experiments
- Liz will talk about the wild pollinator count and some of the interesting and beneficial bugs in gardens
- Graham will start a debate about the Warragamba Dam
- If we have time, we'll look at another of Karlo's recorded talks on native orchids

Please invite anyone you know who may be interested. We'll be recording the talk for the benefit of those who are working in the afternoon.

December 1st

This is our Christmas get together and the first in a long time when we can meet face to face. We will have a picnic gathering at Oatley Park. We'll meet at noon for a BYO lunch in The Castle and perhaps explore the local bush before our formal meeting and AGM at 2 pm. More details in the December newsletter.

We're looking for ideas and requests for next year, so please speak up if you have any special favourites you'd like addressed.

OCTOBER PRESENTATION - URBAN TREES

Street VS Native Trees: Taxonomically Rich Yet Functionally Redundant

Finally, we got to hear Sophie Moore speaking – via Zoom, not actually in the flesh – but at least she was there. Here are some notes about her talk.

The talk was based on Sophie's First Class Master of Research thesis, covering the species and functional diversity of urban street trees across Sydney and Melbourne.

You can watch it again via the APS YouTube channel https://youtu.be/Ir_Su6G5IfQ

If you haven't already done so, please Like it, and subscribe to our YouTube channel which has new offerings being uploaded all the time.

The Urban Forest

The 'urban forest' consists of all vegetation on private and public land within cities – or the collection of plant species present in highly altered ecosystems dominated by people, who shape the types, amounts, and distribution of the forest. This includes everything from street trees to weeds growing in cracks.

The study looked at street trees, which perform a variety of functions in the Urban Forest and examined the varieties of trees used, based on a number of criteria

- Species Diversity
- Single species or families dominating street plantings
- Native VS non-native species
- Planting strategy - Selection for certain features of trees when planting
- Climate resilience

Although there are a great variety of trees planted in cities, many of them are not native to the environment. This results in a loss of biodiversity for the fauna that depend on native flora.

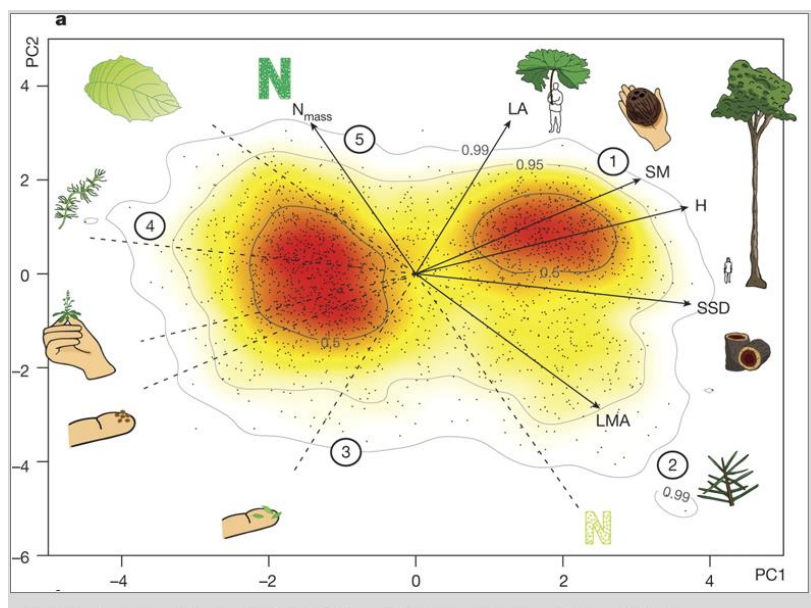
Typically, there are a great many of a few species used as street trees for example. There may be only one or two of the other types of trees, thus further limiting the actual diversity.

Homogeneity creates a risk for diseases and the build-up of undesirable species of bugs and other fauna.

Diversity of function!

The number of species that we see is important, but the features that they bring to a city add another dimension to diversity. Visual features such as flowering time, flower symmetry, leaf shape and arrangement impact our perceptions of urban trees.

For her research, Sophie looked at leaf area, seed mass and maximum height, to see how many kinds of strategies are being used by plants in a given area. These features reflect the plant's strategies to survive and propagate in the harsh urban environment. They also impact the perceived benefits to the human residents.



The global spectrum of plant form and function (Díaz et al., 2016)
Figure 1 Species on the left grow in very hot or cold environments. those on the right in less extreme or tropical environments

Native trees have a much greater diversity in these characteristics than the trees commonly used for urban plantings. This is likely the result of human preferences for shorter trees with similar and less messy seed types. Councils in many cases are biased against native species as they're seen as difficult to grow. Native trees have a wealth of function to contribute to an ecosystem – but can they survive cities? Sophie quoted four examples of indigenous trees that could quite successfully replace some of

the very commonly used street trees. Even if the street trees are native, they are not actually indigenous to the area where they are used.

The talk ended with a new model for selecting street trees that would create a far more effective biodiversity. The selected trees would make a more positive contribution to the biodiversity of the environment.

GROUP NEWS

Pat's Garden

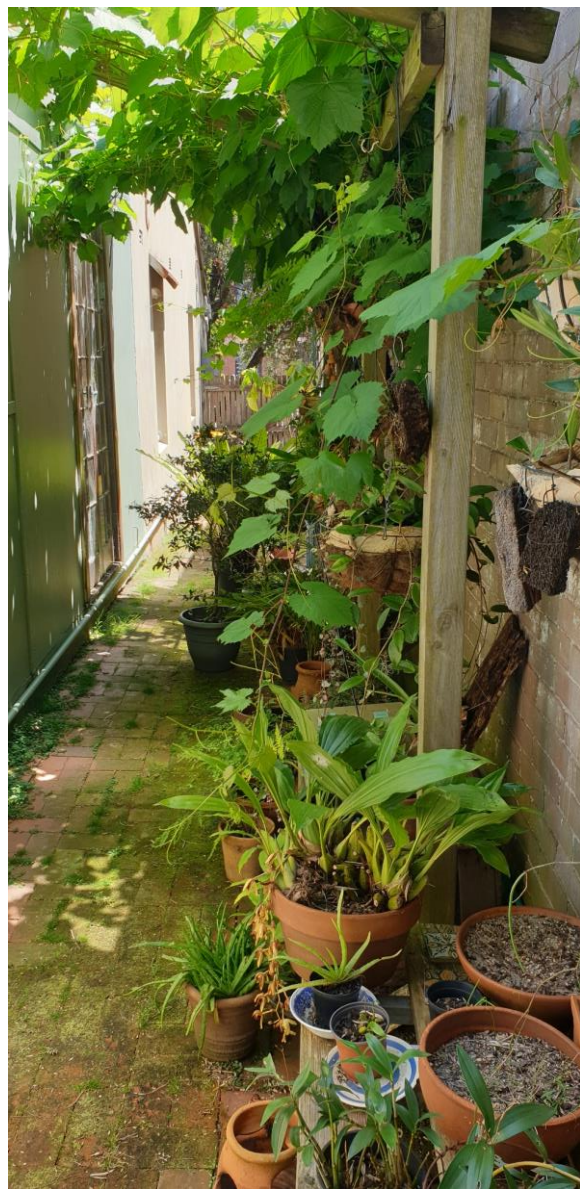
Story and photos from Chris King about her neighbour's small garden

This small narrow Dulwich Hill backyard has a lovely design that makes the most of its constraints with a soft-edged path and a couple of larger trees that break up the space: *Melaleuca stypheloides* and *Eucalyptus scoparia*.

2 Pat's little garden



3 Side passage nursery



Pat is a bush regenerator who grows many of her plants from seed along the side passage which acts as a nursery. The garden soil is clay and was originally planted for habitat with the local Sydney Turpentine Plant Community. This includes *Goodenia ovata* and grasses and scramblers such as *Geranium homeanum*.

The garden has evolved to include other interesting shrubs and Pat also grows some sandstone loving plants in pots such as *Actinotus helianthi* flannel flower.

Another Way to Promote the Australian Plants Society.



4 location for the Sign, by Marie O'Connor

Marie O'Connor had the opportunity during the Covid-lockdown to talk to many passers-by who were exercising locally while she was working in her front garden. Marie's garden of colourful native plants, beautifully laid out and carefully tended, attracted many compliments. It is an ideal advertisement for growing Australian natives.

Marie has suggested that APS NSW could develop a small sign for members to display at the front of their property with a QR code and a message such as "Member of Australian Plants Society, to learn more about growing natives, click on the QR code" [which would lead to the APS website]. The signs would need to be weather-proof and attachable to a range of materials such as brick wall, metal mailbox or wooden stake. What do other members think?

There's no cost for creating the QR code. One thing they haven't managed to monetise!

Hugh Stacy's Legacy

Hugh Stacy wrote the notes for the East Hills plant table for many years. Hugh was such a lovely man and so passionate and knowledgeable about his plants, it would be a great legacy to be able to provide his material to the database.

Most of his write ups would have photos too and the policy for the plants database is to always provide a photo. Jan Douglas (newsletter editor at the time) has undertaken to extract the notes from the MS Word versions of the East Hills newsletters.

So far, she has extracted the content from 7 newsletters and 2 single articles (a total of 30 species descriptions) which have been sent to Dan Clarke, the editor of the plant database, for review.

Dan's primary approach "is to try and immortalise the knowledge of our members...past and present. So, I will aim to incorporate these in some way".

The Wild Pollinator Count

From Liz Cameron, May newsletter

Wild Pollinator Week runs from 14-21 November and everyone is invited to watch a clump of flowers or a flower head for 10 minutes at a time and record pollinators (both native and

introduced) that visit it, then submit their observations online. Multiple observations could be submitted during the week. This Citizen Science program encourages people to look more closely at the insects in their gardens and beyond.



5 photo by Marie O'Connor

From: <https://wildpollinatorcount.com/>

Australia has lots of wild pollinator insects that are often overlooked. European honey bees get a lot of attention because they are an adaptable, generalist forager, which means they are happy to visit almost any flower, in most climate zones. They are also a social species, so their hives are easy to domesticate and manage.

However, many native insects also contribute to pollination in crops and gardens all around the country. We still need to do a lot of research to identify all our pollinator insect species, understand their ecology and how they are affected by human activities. So far, we know that Australia has around 2,000 native bee species, all of which are important pollinators. We also know there are a couple of thousand butterfly, wasp, fly, moth, beetle, thrips and ant species, some of which are documented pollinators. Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of

information on the ecology of many of these insects, what flowers they pollinate, or where they are found.

The Wild Pollinator Count gives you an opportunity to contribute to wild pollinator insect conservation in Australia. We invite you to count wild pollinators in your local environment and help us build a database on wild pollinator activity. You can join in by watching any flowering plant for just ten minutes sometime in our count week.

See <https://wildpollinatorcount.com/count-pollinators/> for instructions

Light Reading Material - Australian Plants and Birds

Helen Herring, a former member of East Hills Group, has offered her back issues of Australian Plants Society magazines dating back to the 1970s; they include some from the Australian National Botanic Gardens in Canberra.

Graham Walters has recent issues of Australian Birdlife, a quarterly magazine with bird news, identification tips, stunning photos and ads for bird-watching tours.

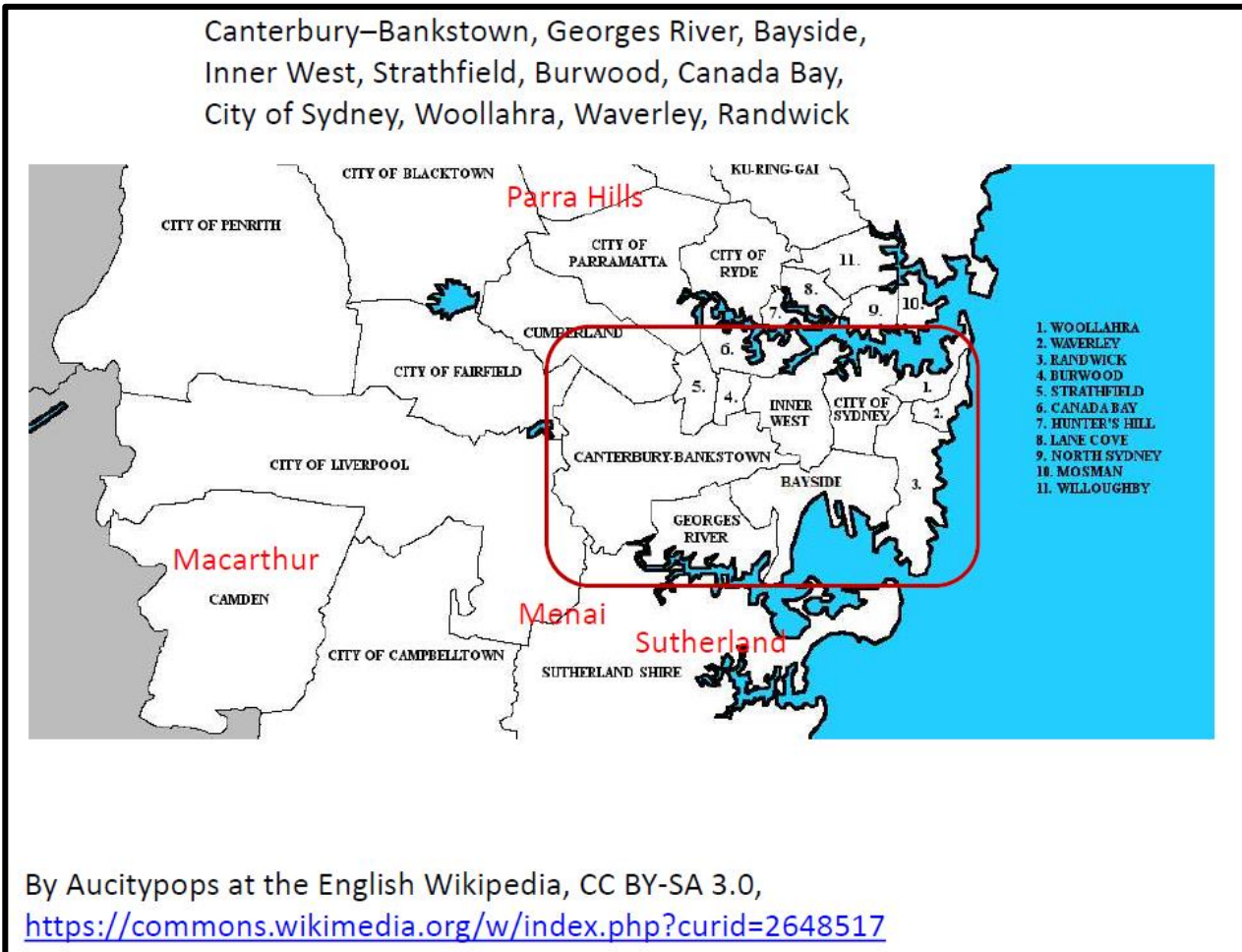
Please contact Liz Cameron, EHG Secretary, if you are interested in one, a few, or many copies. My contact details are at the end of this newsletter.

Our Patch

'Our Patch' – the area of inner Sydney where our members live, is quite large, extending east and north from Georges River to the harbour and the coast. We recently discovered that there are about 25 APS members who live in 'our patch' that don't belong to a district group. They mainly live in the inner west or eastern suburbs and tend to think of 'East Hills' as the end of the train line and therefore really remote. The committee offered to adopt these orphans and requested Merle Thompson, the APS membership officer, to invite them to join us.

It turns out that there are also some inner urban APS members who belong to North Shore, Nowra or some other group for the same reason, so Merle included them in the invitation too. As a result, we may have some new members, so watch out for them at meetings and make them welcome.

We have talked about **changing the name of the group** to better reflect our whole patch, but no decision has been made yet. If you have any suggestions for a new name, please speak up at the end of Wednesday's meeting.



'Our Patch' outlined in red

THE PLANT TABLE

As is now our tradition, the plant table was presented via Zoom. This has the advantage that you can see the whole plant in situ, although you can't appreciate the perfume, if there is one.

There was a good collection of photos, but only one write up this month. Sorry!

Tetragonia tetragonioides

commonly known as Bush spinach or Warrigal greens, or sometimes even New Zealand spinach, it is usually found on the shady banks of creeks and rivers. It rarely looks as lush as it does in my garden, where it self-seeded from a rather pathetic example I had planted. Its quite **edible** and has the advantage over normal spinach that it doesn't collapse into a soggy little grey heap when you boil it. This is just as well, as you need to boil it to leach out the oxalic acid that can

collect in your kidneys, resulting in kidney stones. There are many opinions on the leaching



6 Dorothy's tetragonia and friends

process, ranging from boil for 10 minutes, to boil twice, to don't worry about it if you don't eat it very often. I usually boil it for a couple of minutes and only eat it about once a week at the most. It keeps its shape after the boiling and can be kept in the fridge for a few days after that.

As for using it in **cooking**, the common approach is to use a spinach quiche recipe. It also goes very well in a sea food salad or add a sprinkle of olive oil, garlic and soy sauce and throw some tortellini and cheese over it. My favourite is to use it in a stir fry, again because

it keeps its shape and it's cheaper than buying bok choy if it's in the garden. Clarence Slocock, via Narelle Happ, recommends it for **pesto with macadamias** for a truly Aussie dish:

(cup measures from my standard basil pesto recipe given in brackets as a guide)

Ingredients

50g macadamia nuts (raw, roasted or salted; your choice) [buy in pieces] (1/2 cup)

1-2 cloves garlic (or more!)

250g warrigal greens, blanched (I use 1.5 cups of leaves, but not sure for this one)

125ml olive oil or less (original recipe asks for 250ml) (1/2 cup)

100g parmesan cheese, finely grated (this is more than my 1/3 cup, so use at least 1/2 cup)

salt and pepper to taste (try native pepper berries).

Method

Warrigal greens [stalk can be stringy: just use the first 4-5 leaves from the growing tip]: wash and then blanch in boiling water for a few minutes [to get rid of the oxalic acid, present in all raw spinaches]. Drain (discard water) and cool. [I squeeze the excess water out of the leaves then un-scrunch them a bit.] In a good blender, blend the Warrigal greens with the nuts and garlic. Slowly add the oil, then the cheese and, if you wish, salt and pepper.

Serve cold as a dip with raw veges (eg carrot and celery sticks, or apple slices dipped in lemon juice) and/ or rice crackers or hot on pasta.

The picture looks very bright green, and it probably doesn't go black like basil pesto does. OK I'll try it out !!



FROM OUR OCTOBER MEETING

APS EAST HILLS GROUP MEETING

Via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

APS NSW - East Hills Group Meeting held via Zoom, Wednesday 6 October 2021

Dorothy Luther of EHG co-ordinated the Zoom connection.

Attendance: At least 30 participants – members of East Hills (10), Sutherland (6), Menai Wildflower (1) and North Shore (1) Groups of APS, Oatley Flora and Fauna (5) and ten other visitors of whom a couple may have been intruders.

Following some informal chat, President Marie opened the formal meeting at 2.05 pm with an Acknowledgement of Country, and a welcome to members and visitors; participants were invited to introduce themselves. The guest speaker, Sophie Moore was then introduced. She is a researcher and teacher at Macquarie University who recently completed a thesis on the Urban Forest as part of the Inter-Uni project 'Which Tree Where'

<https://www.whichplantwhere.com.au>

Sophie's talk about urban trees was titled "Street v. native trees: taxonomically rich yet functionally redundant". Ralph Cartwright of Sutherland Group kindly recorded the talk and it is now loaded on the APS NSW YouTube channel at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lr_Su6G5IfQ

Sophie's talk was followed by questions, then a virtual Plant Table - Dorothy screened photos from the gardens of members including Marie O'Connor, Dorothy Luther and Graham Fry; also shown was a flower spray of the Orange Blossom Orchid *Sarcochilus falcatus*, uncovered by someone doing bush regeneration in the Southern Highlands.

Following the talk and virtual Plant Table, visitors left the Zoom meeting and the following business was conducted with the remaining 10 EHG members.

General Business:

1. Promoting APS: With people restricted to exercising close to home, Marie has been talking to many passers-by about the native plants in her garden. She suggested a QR code be created that links to the APS NSW website; members could display it at the front of their gardens so passers-by could source information on APS and growing natives.

2. APS NSW Plant Database: Dorothy would like to utilise the plant table notes that Hugh Stacy wrote for EHG Newsletters. It would be a nice tribute to Hugh's legacy to add them to the APS Plant database where there are gaps, and include Hugh's photos. It would require all the notes to be extracted from the newsletters and sorted, then compared with those already in the database. Jan Douglas is willing to extract the notes from the newsletters and Dorothy thought a member of Hugh's family might be prepared to undertake the painstaking task of checking against the database. Liz Cameron is prepared to do that if necessary. Dan Clarke would do the final editing, but Jan emphasised that, to be true to Hugh's legacy, his wording should not be changed.

3. Potential new members for East Hills Group: Dorothy has identified about 20 APS NSW members who are not affiliated with a particular APS group and whose postcodes fall within the boundaries of the current EHG membership. APS Membership Officer Merle Thompson will contact them and invite them to join EHG.

4. EHG events for the remainder of 2021: Final monthly meeting for the year – Wednesday 3rd November – will be held via Zoom. It is hoped that one of Sophie Moore's colleagues could give a presentation.

The Christmas picnic lunch gathering and AGM will be held from midday in The Castle at Oatley Park, probably on Wednesday 1st December but date to be confirmed. Liz to book the venue with Georges River Council. Members BYO food, beverages and chairs. Invite someone from Oatley Flora and Fauna to chair the AGM elections.

5. EHG meetings in 2022: Kevin Hanley, hon. Property Manager for Lugarno Peakhurst Uniting Church, has advised Tony that the Church will notify him after the end of October, when hire of the Church spaces can recommence. Kevin needs confirmation now, that EHG intends to resume hire of the premises and the days and hours of intended use.

Meeting decided that we would not hire space in the Church again this year, but wish to meet there in the afternoons from 1.30 - 4.30 pm for five months next year – February to June 2022 – in the worship area because the audio-visual equipment is better.

6. Canterbury Bankstown Climate Action Network has contacted EHG – they would like to reach out to groups and individuals across the LGA who are keen to lobby the council on climate action. Meeting agreed that although not all members of East Hills Group lived in the Canterbury Bankstown LGA, we would be happy to support the Climate Action Network's campaigns. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1851232281772114/>

Meeting closed about 4 pm

Attendance at Zoom meeting:

Speaker: Sophie Moore;

APS East Hills Group: Boyd Webster, Dave Crawford, Dorothy Luther, Ellie Smith, Graham Fry, Graham Walters, Jan Douglas, Liz Cameron, Marie and Des O'Connor;

Menai Wildflower Group: Jan Riley, Ruth B

North Shore Group: Jan Williamson;

Sutherland Group: Andrew Rowlatt, Jill McLelland, Karen Thorn, Ralph Cartwright, Rhonda Daniels,

Oatley Flora and Fauna: Graham Lalchere, Kim Wagstaff, Malcolm McPherson, Melina Amerasinghe, Vicki Bolling.

Judi, Deb, Joan, Alice Ridyard (Eco Logical Australia), Sue Walters, Sybil, Greg; Shaani Jag (may have logged off before meeting began); Jeremy Chin; FatCat Mustafa (logged on about 4 pm so we shut down the meeting)

Correspondence Received - October

The full text of these newsletters is available from the Members area of the APS website, on the District Group pages.

Native Plants for NSW – November 2021

The monthly e-newsletter of the Australian Plants Society NSW, available at <https://resources.austplants.com.au/newsletters-journals/monthly-eneewsletter/>

Note that this is a pdf and the links don't work. You need to save your emailed copy to access the links.

Australian Plants Society, Sutherland NSW Group - Newsletter October 2021

Plant table, blue kangaroo paw developed in WA.

Australian Plants Society, Hunter Valley NSW Group - Newsletter October 2021

The Boarding-House Tree, native bees, Hunter Valley Native Plants

Australian Plants Society, South East NSW Group - October 2021

Always a good read with lots of member stories and learned articles

A real live event – tour to Deua National Park, west of Moruya, to observe the regenerating bushland; plants and honey bees as pollinators of grevilleas (or not), and a graft-chimera (look it up if you're curious), local island communities

Pre-conference tour to Huskisson and 2 nights at Batemans Bay

Australian Plants Society, Newcastle NSW Group – Oct/Nov 2021

Pea flowers, Strickland State Forest, 2 art exhibitions on flowers, lots of lovely photos



Think of them as butterflies in the making. Photos by Marie O'Connor

COMING EVENTS

For details of coming events, please see the APS NSW e-newsletter (which members should be receiving by email at the end of each month).

You can find more district group events on the APS NSW website at <http://austplants.com.au/calendar>

Wednesday 3 November 2021 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm	East Hills Group meeting. - Lugarno Peakhurst Uniting Church, 909 Forest Road Lugarno Members day – short talks on a variety of topics Via Zoom link https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88168227873?pwd=c0hDeHpuZzFSL243ZDEwVExKT0hjQT09
Wednesday 3 November, 7 pm	Newcastle group on Climate Change – By Dr Ben Henley, via Zoom https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84616837418?pwd=bjdoQ2hLandEYUJ4ZHFBT0JVeGhUdz09 Meeting ID: 846 1683 7418, Passcode: 067418
Saturday 6 November, 9:30 am	A real live event!!! From South East Group A visit to Deua National Park, west of Moruya, to observe the regenerating bushland
Wednesday 10 November, 7 pm	Helen Patience giving tips for handling and caring for native cut flowers. Menai Wildflower Group
Thursday 25 November, 7:30 pm	“Plants in Containers” Study Group presentation in lieu of the APS Quarterly Gathering, via Zoom Link to be supplied closer to the time
Wednesday 1 December from noon	East Hills Group Christmas party and AGM Face to face at The Castle, Oatley Park. follow Douglas Haig St to enter the park
Sunday 12 December, 3 pm to 5pm	Sutherland end-of-year gathering at Joseph Banks Reserve

EAST HILLS GROUP CONTACTS

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<http://austplants.com.au/East-Hills>

