



APS EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER

NEXT EHG MEETING:

Meeting via Zoom, Wednesday 6th October at 2 pm

Zoom link

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81452080682?pwd=Q2dRSTNBNTBaU1JnY2czSS8zTVBJQT09>

Sophie Moore on urban trees

Send photos for the online display table to Dorothy by Tuesday

Hoping to see you all back again in November.

Stay safe & well until then

VISITORS ARE ALWAYS WELCOME

October 2021

WELCOME to the October 2021 edition of the APS East Hills Group Newsletter.

This month's newsletter is trying out a new concept – I challenged everyone to write story about their lockdown. It has resulted in some interesting stories and things you may not have known about your friends before. We have veered away from plants to include the fauna that live with, or on, them as well.

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,

I hope you are all enjoying Spring with the amazing changes it brings to our gardens. We may soon be able to visit each other & share our gardens as well as face to face Meetings again.

There are great opportunities to introduce new ideas with plants & trees at this time of the year. The joy of going out & picking flowers to bring into our house to arrange in vases is a lovely way to further enjoy the garden.

I have kept up my education of the locals about our group & what we do, as well as pruning and caring for native plants. As they walk by & ask about the garden, I have met new people in our area. One positive thing about lockdown is the sense of community that is occurring with people walking & talking to neighbours again, as it was in the past.

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 (sorry, Zoom technology isn't up to delivering afternoon teas yet).

Stay safe and look after your well-being.

Enjoy your gardens.

Warmest regards to all,

Marie O'Connor.

President, East Hills Group

GUEST SPEAKER

Finally we get to hear Sophie Moore speaking – via Zoom, not actually in the flesh – but at least she is there. Here are some notes about her and her talk to whet your appetite. Please invite anyone you know who may be interested in urban trees. Lockdown also has the advantage that people can take an hour off work to listen in. We'll be recording the talk for posterity too.

Sophie has a background in plant ecology and urban forests and has been involved in research across a range of university-lead projects, most notably with expert workshops for assessing the impact of climate change upon the Gondwana Rainforests and Urban Koala Road Mitigation through Griffith University. Most recently she has contributed to Macquarie University's Smart Green Cities 'Which Plant Where' online selection tool which is due to be launched in the coming months.

Sophie submitted a First Class Master of Research thesis earlier this year, covering the species and functional diversity of urban street trees across Sydney and Melbourne. She has been able to feed this information directly into her current work as a graduate urban forest strategist from Mosaic Insights, where she contributes to Urban Forest planning and strategy within Sydney and Melbourne.

LOCKDOWN STORIES

Lets start with some trivia for our touring members – one of Australia’s many BIG things, that we can’t go & see right now:

https://www.australianexplorer.com/australian_big_icons.htm

The Big Root - Nowa Nowa VIC

At Mingling Waters Caravan Park in Nowa Nowa, East Gippsland we have the "Big Root" - a natural wood sculpture. It is the root system of a Messmate - Eucalyptus obliqua. The tree grew in one metre of sandy loam on top of a limestone shelf. When the root failed to penetrate the limestone, the roots grew laterally. It is part of the J.E (Jack) Ramsdell collection - a unique display of exotic Australian timbers and polished gemstones on display at Mingling Waters. Jack ran the Nowa Nowa sawmill from the early 1950's along with his gallery.



The tree root is known as 'Ra' - the sun god - and is housed in a specially built timber pyramid housed at Mingling Waters.

Age: 200-330 years old, Height: 66m, Height of root system: 4m, Width of root system: 7m
Weight of sculpture: 6 tonnes, Preparation time: 12 months

All photos copyright of Australian Explorer.

Holiday Photo Books

Story & photos by Carol Drew

During the lockdown, I have been mostly making photo books of holidays I had taken in the past. So far this lockdown I have made 8 books, with an average of 120 pages each. Last lockdown I made 14. It has been a very worthwhile project as I get to relive the trips all over again, without all the inconveniences and expense of travel. I am currently in Scotland and haven't been bitten once by their nasty midges.

I use a company called Memento, and they print the book. They can provide templates where you drag your photos into the set template arrangements, although I prefer to manually lay out each page. I organise my photos in Photoshop, and do my own layouts on a page, then drag that page onto their blank page. That way I have complete control.

As well as doing my usual gardening, I have sorted through my CD collection and re played them all. Like everyone else, we have had no people to our home, but I've had lots birds visit and taken a few photos of them to share.



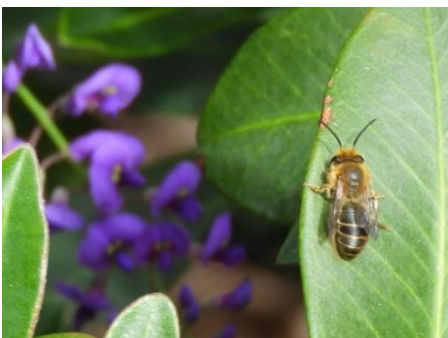


Watching Insects

Story by Liz Cameron, photo by Graham Fry

I've been enjoying walks in the bush, weeding, and taking more notice of insects as the weather warms up.

Our LGA has quite a lot of bushland reserves, most of them narrow strips bordering Georges River and its tributaries. The largest area of bushland is in Oatley Park (45 ha), which has become extremely busy with walkers and cyclists; to avoid the crowds some walkers are exploring less familiar areas. One of these is Poulton Park opposite our home where, while official Bushcare is suspended, Graham and I have been able to exercise by removing asparagus fern (*Asparagus aethiopicus*), privets (*Ligustrum* spp.) and other weeds. It provides an opportunity to chat to passers-by (all masked) about plants they've seen in the park. One man was impressed by a mass of white flowers enveloping a shrub growing on shale soil in a gully, and wondered if it was native. It was Traveller's Joy or Old Man's Beard (*Clematis aristata* family Ranunculaceae) which is widespread in the park but does best in that spot; the website ANBG Growing Native Plants (<https://www.anbg.gov.au/gnp>) notes it "should be grown in a position with some overhead shade and in deep cool soil." This climber can grow so prolifically that it chokes other plants - we had to severely prune one in our garden that was smothering a Scarlet Fuchsia (*Graptophyllum excelsum* family Acanthaceae).



At the beginning of August we noticed bees zipping around a flowering Purple Coral Pea (*Hardenbergia violacea*) on our dwarf Water Gum (*Tristaniopsis laurina*). They were smaller and faster than honey bees and Dr Michael Batley kindly identified them as spring bees (one of the *Trichocolletes* genus). He said *Hardenbergia* is a good place to look for them and he has found them on *Boronia ledifolia* when the first flowers open in early July – very early in the season. Michael suggested looking for orchid pollen stuck to the

bees' faces because *Trichocolletes* males are often deceived by *Diuris* orchids; pollinia stuck to the bees has sometimes alerted him to the presence of orchids in an area.

In the past few weeks all sorts of native bees and beetles and other insects have been attracted to our *Melaleuca nodosa* flowers; we've been entertained just by watching the many visitors to the flowers, some bees already laden with pollen. Later in the year this form of entertainment can contribute to a citizen science project - Australian Pollinator Week 13-21 November

<https://www.australianpollinatorweek.org.au/>

On a walk in Oatley Park last month a smallish butterfly caught my eye because it had orange-yellow patches on its dark upper wings and plain whitish underwings. It was flying close to the ground and settling on low shrubs with its wings partly opened towards the sun. Fortunately there are no other similar butterflies so I was able to identify it from Michael Braby's *Complete Field Guide to Butterflies of Australia* as a Yellow-spotted Blue (*Candalides xanthospilos*). The caterpillars feed on *Pimelea* plants and Slender Rice Flower (*P. linifolia*) was flowering nearby in the sandstone woodland.

Uncommon Plant in Poulton Park

Story & photos by Graham Fry

We are very fortunate to live in an area dominated by sandstone for two reasons:

- a) Sandstone soils are very poor in nutrients so our forebears didn't clear a lot of vegetation on sandstone.
- b) Sandstone soils support a huge range of species.

As a result we have a number of parks in our vicinity with a rich native flora. I think we sometimes take it for granted and it isn't until we visit an area deficient in wildflowers that we appreciate what's on our doorstep.



Recently Liz and I were walking through our local Poulton Park admiring the many plants in flower when we noticed an unusual daisy. We took photos and after perusing a number of plant books including Fairley and Moore, tentatively identified it as *Olearia viscidula* (Wallaby Weed or Viscid Daisy Bush). This identification was confirmed by an experience botanist on the excellent NSW Native Plant Identification Facebook page.

On the Australian Virtual Herbarium we found that although there were many records of this daisy from the Southern Highlands and the foothills of the Blue Mountains, there were very few from the Georges River area and just three from our local area. Those three were all collected in 1893 from sites that are now built over. This plant in Poulton Park might be the last one in our immediate area - very exciting.

We have advised Georges River Council Bushcare and added the record to the Australian Virtual Herbarium. It just shows what we may discover if we take the time to carefully check an unfamiliar plant in our bushland.

NSW Native Plant Identification Fb page:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/332752936930981>

Australian Virtual Herbarium:

https://avh.ala.org.au/occurrences/search?taxa=Olearia+viscidula#tab_mapView

Locked down in Lidcombe

Story & photos by Ellen Hrebeniuk

I love my chooks, but then came the day that I discovered what they had done to the *Hymenosporum flavum* 'Gold Nugget' I had planted only a week before... Most native plant

foliage isn't palatable to chooks, and I hadn't realised that the juicy, shiny leaves of Native Frangipani might appeal... I had to cage the pathetic remnants before they ate it to the ground.



And here is Mutton-Chops, feeling thwarted.
Do that again, and it's soup time!

A month and some rain later and my Gold Nugget is looking much better than it does in these photos, though still not quite itself.

The girls have also chomped all the leaves off my Kattang Carpet, but it is recovering far more slowly. Who would have thought that chooks would eat such a tough plant as a *Casuarina glauca*? Perhaps they thought the leaves looked like tasty worms?

Plant Photography

Story & photos by Graham Fry

As a life time photographer I have tried to keep up with camera technology. I acquired my first digital camera in 2001 and since have had another three. The third camera, a Canon Powershot S5 was a great camera and was very good for macro photography, particularly of flowers. I did replace it a few years with a Nikon Coolpix B700 because it had a good telephoto lens but I quickly discovered it was not so good for macro photography.

I recall when Karlo Taliana gave a presentation to our group on plants of the Georges River NP he advised that he no longer uses a camera but uses his mobile phone for plant photography. I had an old mobile phone, circa 5 years old which, while its features were suitable for me, the battery life was poor and its photographic qualities were very ordinary. After being advised by three different phone repairers that it was not suitable for battery replacement, I reluctantly bought a new phone. However, rather than spend \$1000+, I bought a relatively cheap phone, an OPPO A52, which cost \$250. It is physically larger to accommodate a large battery but has everything I could ever want in a phone. In particular, the photographic qualities of the phone are amazing. Like Karlo I have now stopped using my camera for plant photography and now rely on the phone. I have attached a couple of images taken with the phone. Just shows how technology is changing.



Burchardia umbellata



Tetratheca neglecta

Tiny Plants

Story & photos by Dorothy Luther

It is not boring at all to stay in the house. But how come a bag of rice has 7,456 pieces and the other bag 7,398?

Holidays Pg on FB

Likewise, I've been spending a lot of time in my back garden anxiously watching the few paltry leaves of my tiny plants to see if they're still alive. And if they are, what are they going to grow into – weeds or the things I actually planted last year?

So far, the bulbine lilies (*Bulbine bulbosa* & *Bulbine glauca*) are flowering beautifully. The vanilla lilies (*Arthropodium milleflorum*) are growing lots of leaves. But the chocolate lilies (*Dichopogon fimbriatus*) aren't looking too good. And as for the murnongs (*Microseris lanceolata*), I suspect they're actually weeds, as they don't look much like daisies. Pity because murnongs have very

pretty flowers.



Bulbine lilies



chocolate lilies?



Murnong?

GROUP NEWS

Backyard Bird Count

Have you heard the Channel-bill cuckoos yet? Are the magpies annoying you? Do you live in Noisy miner heaven?

18 to 24 October 2021 is the annual bird count to celebrate Bird Week. Even if we're still locked down, we can sit in our backyards or some suitable place & count birds for 20 minutes. Full details are on the web site. <https://aussiebirdcount.org.au/>

This provides an enormous amount of useful information about the environment where birds & people live. And after all, birds do depend on plants and sometimes its surprising what the interactions are.

APS YouTube Site

The Australian Plants Society's YouTube site has been updated. It has recordings of many interesting talks to APS groups. To join, just click on the **Subscribe** button in the top right hand corner & you are in. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSqvvYJSVpV-MU-rQVAJug>

Isopogon anemonifolius (Broad-leaved Drumstick)

The floral emblem for our East Hills APS Group

Isopogon anemonifolius was first collected by Daniel Solander at Botany Bay during Captain James Cook's voyage in 1770. It was originally labelled *Leucodendron apiifolium*, the generic name given considering its close affinity to the South African Proteaceae with the specific name relating to the divided leaves suggesting a likeness to those of *Apium sp.* (such as celery). This old name was never formally published, so it was never taken up.

Isopogon anemonifolius is the type species (the very first species described) for the genus with the genus name coming from the Greek *isos* meaning 'equal', and *pogon* meaning 'beard', referring to equal length of the hairs on all sides of the nut. The species name is derived from the genus *Anemone* referring to the divided leaves which resemble anemones, and the Latin, *folium* meaning 'leaf'.

This species grows as a bushy shrub with variable height (0.5m-2.0m) by 1.0m wide. It is more likely to grow taller in habitats of dry sclerophyll forests. It's most often found across heathland areas like those found on the ridge at Picnic Point, but it also exists over widespread sections of the Georges River National Park. It is the only member of the genus to occur locally in our area. In more coastal locations, some forms may grow to only 0.5m when exposed to strong headland winds.



The leaves are light green, 5-10cm long, usually flattened and divided into three segments – these in turn are divided into more linear lobes. The yellow flower heads, 4cm wide, occur terminally, often in groups, from Spring to early Summer. Cones are globular, 2cm diameter, eventually dry out to release seed spontaneously. Following bushfires, this species may also

regenerate by reshooting from its lignotuber. Propagation is possible using fresh seed or by semi-hardwood cuttings.

Karlo Taliana, September 2021

Photos from Marie's Garden



Christmas bush in a pot for the deck.



Lilly Pilly in a pot, Pruned & happy; experiment in keeping it potted



Mint bush (beautiful fragrance) & Rice flower



Verticordia

FROM OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING

APS EAST HILLS GROUP MEETING

Via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Separately circulated by our secretary, Liz Cameron - if you didn't get them, please let her know.

Correspondence Received - September

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 – September 2021

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

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

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

Australian Plants Society, Sutherland NSW Group - Newsletter September 2021

Plant table, snippets of news, a possible rare banksia in the Royal; lovely photos

Australian Plants Society, South East NSW Group - September 2021

From the covering email 😊

“Attached is your latest news, containing, not covid virus, but informative articles provided by our members. The articles are presented in the order in which they were received. If you want your news to feature, and would like to see it prominent in the early pages, now is the time to put pen to paper. We do not look like meeting in the short term, so joining the literary crew will help you to maintain some semblance of normality, assist in assuring glowing mental health, and keep me sane by not having to chase up articles. So get to it, “

Followed by numerous short stories about local plant species

Australian Plants Society, Northern Beaches NSW Group - September 2021

New species of carnivorous plant from WA; heliotropism (following the sun) - how & why

Found in Cooks River

Sometimes cleaning up the environment does more harm than good. I found this on the banks of the Cooks River one day, where someone had hauled it out & dumped it. Lots of barnacles, bivalves & worms lost their homes – and their lives. It was making quite a good reef.



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 6 October 2021 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm	East Hills Group meeting. - Lugarno Peakhurst Uniting Church, 909 Forest Road Lugarno Via Zoom link https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81452080682?pwd=Q2dRSTNBNTBaU1JnY2czSS8zTVBJQT09
Wednesday October 13 th , 7 pm	Karlo Taliana talking about our local Native Orchids. Menai Wildflower Group, Illawong Rural Fire Brigade Headquarters, Old Illawarra Road, Illawong. For a map: https://austplants.com.au/Menai-Activities
15-18 October	Four day APS trip to the Central West, POSTPONED DUE TO COVID. Replanning for Autumn 2022
Wednesday November 10 th , 7 pm	Helen Patience giving tips for handling and caring for native cut flowers. Menai Wildflower Group

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

