

APS EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER



February 2021

NEXT EHG MEETING IS OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

IT'S A DAYTIME EVENT:

1.30 pm, Wednesday 3 February 2021

The Castle, Oatley Park

The Castle is located near the Jewfish Bay Swimming Baths in Oatley Park. If you enter Oatley Park by driving along Douglas Haig Street, the turn to the Castle is the first on the left. If you're new to Oatley Park, be aware that many of the roads are one way.

Covid-19 restrictions will be in place.

There are some fixed bench seats at the Castle, but to aid with physical distancing **please bring your own chair if you can.**

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

This brief issue includes a Note from the President, some photos from our December 2020 meeting, an article about recycling plastics and a story about the loss of a tree that had been a long-term friend.

I hope you will be coming to our Annual General meeting, which is next week. It will be good to catch up again, even at a 1.5m distance!

Jan Douglas
Interim Editor
janhd@inet.net.au / 9533 2187

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



A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you all had a good Christmas after such a torrid year. Let's hope 2021 allows us to experience some normal activities. As you will recall, we had to cancel most of our meetings last year but we did have two outdoor visits to Joseph Banks Native Plant Reserve and Sylvan Grove Native Garden.

Our next meeting on the 3rd February will be our 2020 AGM which could not be held in December. Our venue is semi-outdoors and should not cause any concerns regarding Covid-19 transmission, as it is covered but open on three sides. The usual reports will be presented and the election of office bearers will be held. I will be standing down after four years as President and I would dearly like someone else to take over. It is not an onerous job but it is still an important role for our small group. Other groups have struggled, with people reluctant to take on office bearer roles and this eventually resulted in the groups closing. I would hate to see that happen to our group, which is one of the oldest groups in APS NSW.

I would like to thank those who have managed to assist in keeping our group going, in particular, Jan Douglas who does a magnificent job producing the newsletter. This role is particularly difficult as it never ends, just as one newsletter is finalised the next month's is just waiting to be prepared.

Our other office bearers Tony Porritt (Treasurer), Liz Cameron (Secretary) and the Vice Presidents Graham Walters and Karlo Taliana have all done good work during the year. Karlo also has the role of plant propagation officer and has done a great job of producing many great plants during the year - which in turn has made a significant contribution to our income. Finally, there are others such as Dorothy, Marie and Dave who assist with hospitality and other duties that I would also like to thank for their help during the year.

Graham

Graham Fry

President, APS East Hills Group

APS EAST HILLS GROUP MEETING – DECEMBER 2020

Our December meeting was a social occasion, though physically distanced as required by Covid-19 restrictions. We met at Sylvan Grove Native Garden in Picnic Point and enjoyed strolling around the Garden before convening for a BYO lunch.





L-R above: Immature fruit of *Rhodosphaera rhodanthema*; Hibiscus flower; Fruit and leaves of *Sarcopteryx stipata*; Tree trunk with spider home. Photos: Jan Douglas

LOSING A FRIEND IN THE GARDEN

Dorothy Taylor

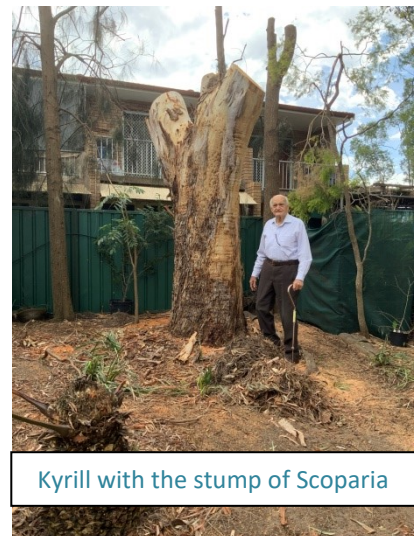
Last year, Dorothy and Kyrill Taylor said goodbye to a tree that had been an important part of their garden for many years. This tree was a mature specimen of Eucalyptus scoparia, Wallangarra White Gum, but familiarly referred to by Kyrill and Dorothy simply as 'Scoparia'. This species is classified as vulnerable and occurs only in small numbers in a restricted area, including three sites near Tenterfield in NSW and another three sites near Stanthorpe in Queensland. However it is common in cultivation, having been planted as an ornamental species in parks and gardens. Interestingly, references I located gave its maximum height as only 12 – 30 metres. But now, over to Dorothy!

This morning, 23 October 2020, we sat and watched the removal of our huge Scoparia tree. For around 50 years it had grown in our back yard, providing shelter for birds and plants. It started as a small seedling in a very small pot bought from the NSW Forestry Commission. Excitedly we watched it grow about 2.5 to 5 cm a week. We measured it. It made us proud to be growing an endangered species which was growing into a handsome tree. It divided into three main branches reaching up to the sky.

Along came a plague of caterpillars, about 12 cm long with spiky bodies, which were very difficult to kill, but using a spade were able to kill up to 150 a day. That was only the ones we could easily reach. Those that climbed higher out of our reach were pulled down using a fishing rod and line and a ladder. These creatures crawled everywhere for a few weeks but gradually we made an impression on them and our tree was saved to grow onto greater height - 60 m in approximately 50 years.

Alas, some years later we found fungi growing on the main trunk – then some sap was observed finding its way to the ground. We also realised that not much sun was coming into our yard during Winter. We contacted Council to come and approve some pruning of the tree. The verdict was that Scoparia was dying and approval was given to demolish the tree.

In came the tree loppers. The birds voiced their disapproval but down came the branches. Those wonderful limbs that reached up so magnificently were falling. The birds' home was lost and our wonderful tree was gone within three hours. I could not help a tear forming as I looked at the wide empty space.



Kyrill with the stump of Scoparia

PLASTICS RECYCLING – THE NEW WAY

Dorothy Luther

At the APS East Hills Group meeting in February 2020, I gave a presentation about a new method of recycling ALL plastic waste. That talk generated a lot of interest, so I thought members might be interested in further information. After reading an article in the University of Sydney News, I investigated further on the website of the company that was set up to put these ideas into production. (<https://www.licella.com.au/cat-htr/>)

The current methods for recycling plastic need you to separate the different types of plastic by checking the triangle before putting plastics in the yellow bin, and taking the soft plastics to the REDcycle bin at the supermarket. Also, the products produced have fairly low value so there is no great incentive to recycle.

The new recycling technology, called Cat-HTR™ (Catalytic Hydrothermal Reactor), allows a wider range of plastics to be recycled, including mixed, dirty or wet plastics and multilayer plastics – a large part of what can't be recycled at present and so goes to landfill. And the products produced are high value products such as oils and greases. By producing high value end products, the raw materials acquire a value which will encourage people to collect them. And you can recycle the products over and over again. The process also uses much less energy and produces fewer emissions than making new plastics from oil.

It took ten years for Professor Thomas Maschmeyer and his team at the University of Sydney to develop the new technology up to production stage. As he says, 'Recycling is not a waste problem, it's a resource opportunity. If we shift to an economy that generates value from traditional waste, the economics will do the rest in terms of providing specific solutions for specific market opportunities. For another 100 years at least, humans will need the energy and chemicals traditionally found in fossil oil. What if that oil could be sustainable, renewable and reduce waste in the process? Nature takes millions of years to create fossil oil. The Cat-HTR™ takes 20-30 minutes to create renewable biocrude oil'.

Professor Maschmeyer formed a company (Licella Holdings) with Len Humphreys to commercialise the product. The first actual production plant is being developed in England as a joint venture with Mura Technologies, a company that has the wherewithal to build a \$40M plant, including the necessary research and development. (Australia obviously doesn't have that!!) This site will be able to process 80,000 tonnes of plastic waste per year. Globally, Mura plans to have a recycling capacity of 1 million tonnes of plastic waste in operation or development by 2025. This includes establishing a chemical recycling industry in Australia for over 85% of plastics that are currently non-recyclable.

More recently, a partnership with KBR (an American based international provider of science, technology and engineering solutions) supports the global deployment of the Cat-HTR™ chemical recycling solution for post-consumer plastic waste.

Professor Maschmeyer has now returned to his laboratory to work on a new type of battery that uses more readily available materials and can be recycled. I hope he wins the Nobel Prize soon.

COMING EVENTS

Because of the Covid-19 outbreak, face-to-face meetings are still restricted. Some APS meetings are being held on-line, using Zoom. For details of coming events, please see the APS NSW newsletter (which members should be receiving by email at the end of each month).



Photos above taken by Jan Douglas

EAST HILLS GROUP CONTACTS

President	Graham Fry	9580 6621	fryg45@gmail.com
Secretary	Liz Cameron	9580 6621	elsmere02@gmail.com
Newsletter Editor	Vacant		
Website Editor	Karlo Taliana	9786 8299	karlo.taliana@optusnet.com.au

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

