

# APS EAST HILLS GROUP NEWSLETTER



**November 2020**

**THE NOVEMBER 2020 EHG MEETING  
HAS BEEN CANCELLED**

**THE DECEMBER 2020 EHG MEETING WILL BE A DAYTIME EVENT  
on Wednesday 2 December 2020  
at Sylvan Grove Native Garden.**

**Details will be in the December newsletter.**

**WELCOME** to the November 2020 edition of the APS East Hills Group Newsletter.

In this issue you will find a note from the President, a notice that the ANPSA conference planned for September 2021 has been postponed, a photo from a face-to-face (at 1.5m!) meeting of East Hills Group members, and words and photos about some very showy plants: Tecomanthe, Graptophyllum and Telopea. Enjoy!

But the layout of this issue is different from usual – can you see what is missing?

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## A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The late summer and autumn rains have certainly had a very positive impact on our flora. Many of our garden plants are providing some of the best flowering displays we have ever seen, and in the bush people are reporting orchids which have not been seen for many years. It just shows the resilience of our flora, which is able to survive and tolerate very dry conditions but respond magnificently when the conditions are favourable.

We had a very successful meeting at the Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve recently, and while many of the flowers were past their best, there was still lots to see and admire. We finished off with a very social morning tea while maintaining social distancing at all times. We agreed that we should repeat the event, but go to Sylvan Grove Native Garden, consequently we will have a day meeting there on 2 December. Again, we ask people to provide their own refreshments, and as this will be our Christmas meeting, perhaps we can afford to be a bit more extravagant than usual.

As I write this, Covid-19 restrictions are still in place. Because of the restrictions, APS NSW has not been able to hold face-to-face regional meetings, but hopefully these will return next year. One exciting possibility next year is the resurrection of the large plant sale days when groups and nurseries would be invited bring stock to a convenient location and APS members and the public would have the chance to again purchase native plants. The APS NSW Board is currently exploring this idea.

Finally, in December East Hills Group normally hold our AGM but this won't be possible indoors, so we could have it at Sylvan Grove Native Garden or using Zoom. Reports could be circulated via the internet, and voting for the office bearers could also be done online. Let me know how you would like to proceed - as an outdoor meeting or via the internet.

## FROM OUR OCTOBER MEETING APS EAST HILLS GROUP MEETING

On the morning of Thursday 15 October, ten East Hills Group members and friends met in Joseph Banks Native Plant Reserve for an informal get together. It was the first face-to-face event for our group since March.



Photo: Graham Fry

## TECOMANTHE

Kate and Tony Porritt

During the East Hills Group visit to Joseph Banks Native Plants Reserve, a number of participants were impressed by the liana-like plant growing near the kiosk. It had large pink trumpet-type flowers in big clusters, the flower bunches growing from old growth woody stems. It appeared to be a bigger version of the plant we had growing at home called *Tecomanthe burungu*. Ours was also in flower at the time. Each flower is about 10 cm in length and the whole bunch is considerably larger than a human hand. The buds are attractive and open quickly into the tubular flower. These can last quite a while but are easily dislodged, especially by rain or wind as has happened to our plant.

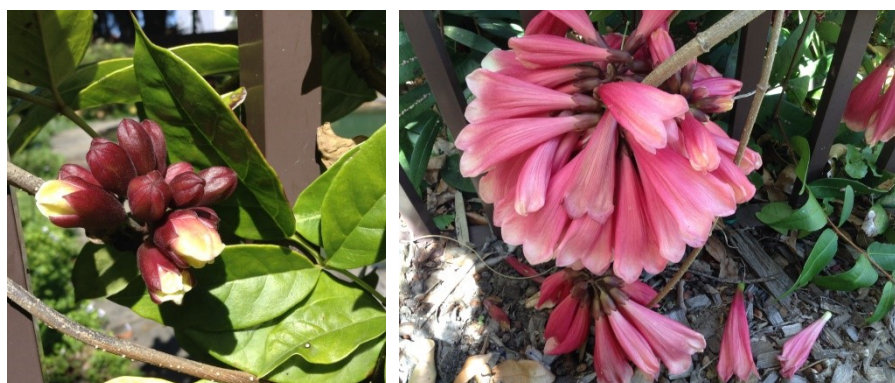
We were aware that our plant was native to North Queensland, growing in an area around Roaring Meg Creek, thus the more common name of *Tecomanthe* 'Roaring Meg Creek'. Although first collected in 1937 it was thought to be a northern variety of the more widely distributed *Tecomanthe hillii* as no fruit could be found. The common name of *T. hillii* is the Fraser Island Creeper and it occurs in eastern Queensland but not the northern tropics.

In 2012 the first fruiting liana of the northern variety was discovered and it was confirmed to be a different species and given the new species name '*burungu*'. There is a great variance in opinion on how big the plant gets. Our label says it has a 2 metre spread whereas various web sites say between 10 and 30 metres. Ours is currently about 1 metre and the one at Joseph Banks Reserve was about 5 metres, although we are not sure if the species at Joseph Banks Reserve is *T. hillii* or *T. burungu*. The differences seem to be in leaf structure and perhaps flower colour, but are not readily noticeable by the amateur enthusiast.

*Tecomanthe* belongs to the family Bignoniaceae, and consists of six or seven known species. They are the two Australian species, one from New Zealand, another from New Guinea and two growing throughout Indonesia, New Guinea and the Moluccas. Well-known genera in Bignoniaceae include Jacaranda, Pyrostegia and Pandorea.

The species from New Zealand (*T. speciosa*, Three Kings Vine or akapukaea) is extremely rare, with only one plant being known in the wild, on Three Kings Island off Northern New Zealand. It is also the only *Tecomanthe* species where the flowers start white and stay white. The other species start white or pale pink and deepen in colour as they mature.

The photos below show *Tecomanthe burungu* in our garden. The first shows the flowers prior to opening, the next shows a bunch of open flowers and the final photo (over the page) is a close-up.







Photos above: Tony Porritt.

*Below, for comparison, are photos of buds and flowers of Tecomanthe hillii (Fraser Island Creeper) growing in Lugarno. The spread of this plant is about 5 metres and it is still growing. - Editor*



Photos above: Jan Douglas.

## POSTPONEMENT OF THE 2021 ANPSA BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

### A MESSAGE FROM THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

The organising committee of the ANPSA Biennial Conference has made the difficult decision to postpone the September 2021 Biennial Conference to September 2022. While heartened by the reductions in transmission of Covid-19 around Australia, planning for the conference has continued to be difficult due to:

- Our members tending to be from the 'higher risk' category and uncertainties about a vaccine
- Challenges with travel given changing restrictions, particularly other states and internationally
- The changing social distancing requirements at the conference and on buses, with flow-on impacts to tours, excursions and of course costs
- Our view that a digital conference is not a good alternative given how important social interaction and exploring the region's flora are at these conferences.

The decision to postpone has been done in consultation with the ANPSA Executive and Chris Long, APS Victoria, Coordinator of the 2023 Biennial Conference. **The new dates for the Conference are: Sunday 11 September to Friday 16 September, 2022 and our theme continues to be: Australian flora - past, present, future.**

Communication will go out to all members and those who have expressed interest in the conference in the next few days. Please feel free to share the news with your members via your group newsletters.

We are keen to host everyone in Kiama in 2022 and showcase the beautiful Illawarra area and beyond!

Kind regards,

Biennial Conference Committee



## GRAPTOPHYLLUM

Carol Drew

*In this article, Carol shares her experiences in her garden with two species of Graptophyllum, both tall shrubs that grow naturally in restricted areas of Queensland.*

A plant that consistently flowers well in my semi-shaded garden is *Graptophyllum ilicifolium* (Holly leafed Fuchsia). It flowers from late Spring to early Summer and is very tough, requiring no watering after the initial planting out.

I have found it slow to get going, and once established only requires an occasional judicious pruning to maintain its bushy habit.

The red tubular bell flowers stand out and are a lovely contrast to the darker green, holly-shaped foliage, which always looks good, even when not in flower. I have three different colour variants, but the bright red is the best.

Another species of Graptophyllum is *G. excelsum* (Scarlet Fuchsia), with elliptical leaves (last photo), but I don't find this one as good: it is slower-growing and the flowers tend to be towards the top of the plant, where *G. ilicifolium* has the flowers all the way to the ground.





## SOME FLOWERS OF *TELOPEA SPECIOCISSIMA* (WARATAHS)

The first three photos were taken by Karlo Taliana and show some roadside Waratahs in cultivation at Robertson (Southern Highlands) that Karlo saw in October. The remaining photos are of Waratahs growing wild in the Blue Mountains, near Mt Whaite, and were taken by Jan Douglas in September 2012.



## COMING EVENTS

For details of coming events, please see the APS NSW e-newsletter .

### EAST HILLS GROUP CONTACTS

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



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