



# Newsletter of Menai Wildflower Group

## March 2022

### Contents

Coming in 2022 _____	1
Autumn Quarterly Gathering _____	1
Coming events _____	2
Latest from members _____	2
Of interest _____	4
Photographic challenge _____	4
Proteaceae Quiz _____	5
Helen needs help! _____	5
News from the Nurseries _____	5

### Coming in 2022

The committee has made a start on what looks like an interesting program of speakers for the year. However, our first meeting was so plagued with glitches that we had to reschedule Peter's talk till later in the year. Apologies to all who joined the Zoom meeting but you will have the chance to listen and see Peter's botanical ramble through colonial Sydney at a future date. Apparently, some members didn't receive notification of the change from the fire station venue to Zoom. If this was you, please let us know. Email is now our default notification method so if you don't use email, please give us an alternative phone. If you didn't receive the email, please email the editor from your own email address so we can update your details.

Meetings have moved to the **second Saturday of each month at 2pm** (with the exception of the APS NSW Quarterly). The venue is still not certain as a new Covid policy at the fire station precludes visitors. The committee is investigating options and will let members know as soon as the problem is resolved. Meetings will have the same format as usual: general business, a speaker and plant table. Afternoon tea will be served at the end of the meeting and plants will be on sale.



Sleepy koala near Woronora River. P Forbes.

### Autumn Quarterly Gathering

With the continuing problems about meeting at the fire station, the APS NSW Quarterly Meeting will be at **1.15pm at the Illawong Community Centre** in Illawong shopping centre.

NSW APS charges **\$5 members/ \$10 general entry** fee which includes a presentation by Chris Gambian, chief executive of the National Conservation Council, speaking about the great work done by this organisation. Lloyd will then talk about the Glossies in the Mist campaign, and how MWG is propagating seedlings to help save this endangered bird.

The fire station will be open from **8:30-12:00** for **plant sales** with garden tours for visitors at 11:30. There will be two **guided walks** of different difficulty and focus. Join the walks at the fire station at 9:00. Greg and Pam F. will cover both the natural and cultural heritage in their walk around Delardes Reserve. This is an **easy** walk; fairly flat and predominately on grass or made track. The other walk, led by Lloyd, will wander along the tracks between the reactor and the Woronora River. There

have been sightings of koalas in the area so you may be lucky, but in any case, there is some pleasant bush with areas of Angophora woodland interspersed with Grey Gums on the richer soils. Keep in mind though that this walk is longer and steeper with **some loose footing on uneven bush tracks.**



Red flower of Callistemon sp.. M. Hughes.

*Editor*

### Coming events

**Mar 12** We are hosting the **APS NSW Quarterly**. Plant sales at fire station from 8:30 -12:00. Walks from fire station from 9:00-10:30. Garden tour at fire station at 11:15. **All subject to weather!** Presentations by Chris Gambion and Lloyd Hedges at 1:00 at the Community Centre at Illawong shopping centre. The NSW APS charges **\$5 members/\$10 general entry**, Details [here](#).

**Apr 9** Herpetologist **Ken Griffith** will be introducing us to **frogs and lizards of the Sydney region**. The unusually wet summer has hopefully enhanced frog populations and this might be a chance to identify some newly found amphibian friends.

**Apr 8-19** **Easter Show**

**May 14** **Peter Knight** will be speaking but subject is yet to be confirmed.

**Jun** **Ruby Paroisein** who we have seen before talking about Pink Flannel Flowers, will return with her results on research on the **Gynea Lilies's Fire Response.**

**Sep 11-16** **APS Biennial Conference, Kiama**

February's meeting has shown that Covid19 disruptions are still around so please keep your eyes open for updates and confirm details before any event. We are using a Covid-19 safe protocol and activities are subject to remaining NSW Government restrictions.

*Editor*



Green tree frog (?) at Tip. P Forbes.

### Latest from members

My family always have a festive wreath at Christmas which often involves natural materials. After hearing the great tips Helen gave at our November meeting, I made a bigger effort this year to add native flora.



My Christmas wreath, P Forbes.

Marian W. is one of several members who took advantage of the oversupply this year to pick up a Pink Flannel Flower. Marian is a key worker at the Tip Nursery where they are grown so it is great to see she was rewarded with a gorgeous display of flowers. Great work Marian.



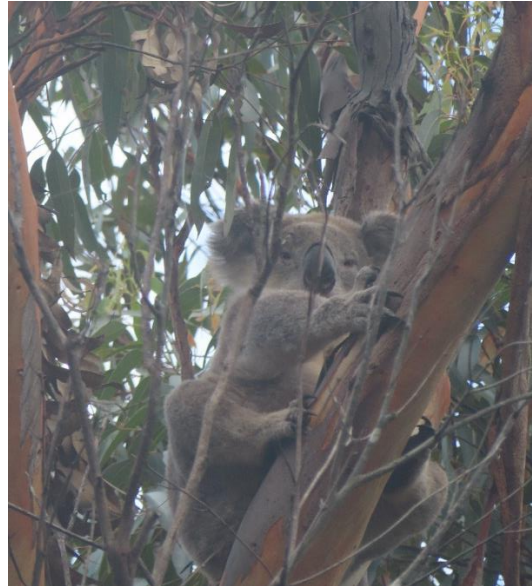
Pink Flannel Flower in full bloom. M Whatman.

Lloyd enjoyed a close encounter with a King Parrot.



Lloyd with a friend. M Hedges.

Could be extremely tame parrot but unfortunately another explanation is that it was sick. Koalas have been seen at several places along the Woronora catchment and several members were lucky enough to catch these photogenic icons. Their preferred food tree in this area is Grey Gum so look for them in the richer soil areas.



Koala. P Forbes.

Another visitor at our home in January was a Brush/Bush Turkey. This large bird has a mainly black body plumage, bare red head, yellow throat wattle and laterally flattened tail. Most have us have encountered one on a bush walk somewhere as they are found all along the east coast from Cape York to the Illawarra. I haven't seen one at Illawong in all the time I've lived here but Lloyd has seen one around before and I have heard of other sightings in Sutherland Shire.



Brush Turkey making itself at home. P Forbes.

The Bush Turkey is the largest of Australia's three megapodes (Family Megapodiidae also includes the Orange-footed Scrubfowl, and the Malleefowl and

a total of 20 species through broader Australasia). The megapodes are a distinct family of the group of fowl-like birds (Order Galliformes), which includes quails, turkeys, peafowl and junglefowl.

While they generally like rainforests and wet sclerophyll forests, they can also be found in drier scrubs. Bush Turkeys expose insects, seeds and fallen fruits by raking the leaf litter or breaking open rotten logs with their large feet.

Like the other megapodes, the Bush Turkey incubates its eggs in a large mound of organic matter, built by the male. The mound is typically 4m diameter and 1m high so the heat of the composting material keeps the eggs warm with the father adding or taking off material to constantly maintain the right temperature. After hatching, the chicks burrow out of the mound, fully feathered and ready to fend for themselves. They can walk straight away and fly after a few hours.

This behaviour is fascinating but doesn't endear the birds to gardeners. We have lots of shallow scrapes appearing, but as most of our block is natural bush, we have no problems yet. So we are enjoying this unusual visitor. You might find one in your backyard soon? More information at Birdlife Australia or Australian Museum.

Finally, Masked Bees (*Hylaeus sp.*) have started nesting in our bee home. They have a glossy black body with contrasting bright yellow shoulder patches. They are solitary bees who create, or in the case of a bee home use, holes in timber to lay their eggs, before sealing the hole with transparent cover. Instructions for making a bee house are available at Gardening Australia.



Masked bee. P Forbes.

*P Forbes*

## Of interest

Check out what's coming up at APS NSW in 2022 using the calendar [here](#).

A range of presentations has been compiled on the NSW APS Youtube channel, as Ralph Cartwright demonstrated at our last meeting. Go to Youtube and search for the NSW APS channel for more.

The Conversation has several interesting articles on the Australian environment, flora and fauna. Some have already been linked on our Facebook page. Another that caught my eye discussed the possibility of bringing back the [Tasmanian Tiger](#) although, apparently, they were on the path to [extinction](#) before humans accelerated the decline. Further news on the funding of a de-extinction project can be found [here](#) and a remastered and colourised version of the famous video of the last Tasmanian Tiger is [here](#).

*Editor*



Water Dragon. L Hedges.

## Photographic challenge

MWG members and others contributed some lovely photographs on January's theme, red. Subjects ranged through plants, lichen and animal wildlife. Geometry, February's theme, seemed more intimidating but we still received quite a few photographs demonstrating shapes, patterns and symmetry. They can be seen on our Facebook page. Coming up in the next quarter are -

- March      Members at work, in the garden or nursery.
- April      Seeds and fruits; native plants reproducing.
- May        Landscape; forests or plains, coast or mountain.
- June        Members having fun, one or many on walks, meetings, nursery or gardens.

Get your cameras/phones clicking and submit contributions by email to the editor.

*Editor*



Red flowers on *Eucalyptus sp.* M Whatman.

## Proteaceae Quiz

This quarter's intellectual challenge is a test of your knowledge on the fascinating Proteaceae family, based on an article by Dr T Cochran in a previous *Australian Plants* issue. Answers at end of newsletter. The Proteaceae family has over 1,600 species; have fun testing your knowledge.

Q1. Name 2 continents, other than Australia, where you find Proteaceae.

Q2. Name 4 genera of Proteaceae in Australia.

Q3. The nuts of which Proteaceae species is grown commercially?

Q4. Which specialised feature of Proteaceae makes them intolerant of fertilisers?

Q5. There are 5 subfamilies of Proteaceae. Which subfamily has only one living species (Tasmanian Mountain Rocket)?

Q6. Which is NOT in the Proteaceae family?

Conospermum, Elaeocarpus, Persoonia, Grevillea or Telopea.

Q7. All but one species of Banksia is restricted to Australia. Where else can you find a Banksia?

Q8. Which has more species, Banksia or Hakea?

Q9. Who are Banksia named after?

Q10. A classification of the genera within Proteaceae was made by Lawrie Johnson and which member of APS, in their influential 1975 monograph *On the Proteaceae: the evolution and classification of a southern family?*

## Helen needs help!

Helen Patience has kindly stepped forward once again to coordinate our entries into the Easter Show. This is a great opportunity to promote wildflowers and specifically our group, but Helen needs help. You may remember Helen's talk last year when she created two beautiful bouquets with material from the Fire Station and her home garden. Not surprisingly with her talent, Helen swept the floor at last year RAS competition with many prizes. To achieve the same success this year we need to have a good supply of plant material and some help with logistics.

The arrangements will be made at Helen's place on Good Friday and she needs flowers, foliage and plants in pots. Native orchids flowering in the pot would be good. Do you have something special or spectacular that will be flowering? You can call Helen on 0408 489 797 for more details or with offers of help. Let's all get behind Helen to lighten her load as much as possible.

## News from the Nurseries

At the Tip Nursery we are temporarily on top of things and are relaxing a bit. We have about 6000 tube stock ready for the autumn plantings. These are mainly *Allocasuarina littoralis* but with a good scattering of *Eucalyptus sp.* among them to potentially provide nesting hollows a hundred years or so in the future.



*Allocasuarina* at Tip Nursery. P Forbes.

There are also some understory plants to get that going as well. There is good evidence that these shrubs play an important role in creating the right environment for wasps and other critters that stop destructive species from getting out of balance.

We are about to start sowing for the spring plantings so things are about to heat up again and also it is *Actinotus* time as late summer- autumn is when they germinate readily.

Adrian Polhill is investigating some possibilities for future projects. It will be interesting to see how it will all go.

We are trialling different cutting techniques mainly at the Compound nursery using peat plugs rather than the traditional mix.

Thanks to all the volunteers who have spruced up the Fire Station gardens – Lloyd, Ann, Jan, Cameron, Matt, Pam F., Marion P. Marian W., Greg, Tony P., John P., Andrew.



Kangaroo Paws get a haircut. P Forbes.

#### Quiz Answers

Q1. South America and Africa. Proteaceae originated in Gondwana.

Q2. Banksia, Grevillea, Hakeas, Macadamia, Lomatia, Telopea, Conospermum, Isopogon, Adenanthos ... lots! Wikipedia has full list.

Q3. Macadamia or Gevuina (Chilean Hazelnuts).

Q4. Proteoid roots. They don't form symbiotic with mycorrhizal root fungi.

Q5. Belledenoideae.

Q6. Elaeocarpus.

Q7. *B. dentata* extends into New Guinea and the Aru Islands.

Q8. Banksia has around 170 species and Hakea only 150.

Q9. Sir Joseph Banks, gentleman naturalist on board Endeavour on her 1770 voyage of discovery.

Q10. Barbara Briggs. Their classification has been revised in the light of new genetic studies.



Red flowers on gum at fire station. P Forbes.

Website [www.menaiwildflower.austplants.com.au](http://www.menaiwildflower.austplants.com.au)

E-mail [menaiwildflower@austplants.com.au](mailto:menaiwildflower@austplants.com.au)

Newsletter [mwfeditor@gmail.com](mailto:mwfeditor@gmail.com)

President	Peter Olde	
Vice President	Lloyd Hedges	0400431216
Secretary	Graeme Davies	0427232526
Treasurer	Jan Riley	0499015669
Editor	Pam Forbes	
Publicity Officer	Marion Payne	0412403067

#### General Committee

Margaret Olde  
Mary Hedges  
Annette Tuckfield  
Helen Patience  
Alan Ferguson