

Blandfordia



North Shore Group
(ABN 87 002 680 408)

MARCH 2024

Amendment: Last issue was FEBRUARY 2024 edition, not JANUARY 2024 Edition

President's Message

I am writing this on yet another stormy day. I have just been outside and was absolutely thrilled to see a brilliant flash of yellow near my perennial basil. A teddy bear bee, no less!!!! My first one at my new home!! My day has just become so much brighter!!!

<https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/biosecurity/plant/bees-and-wasps/teddy-bear-bee>

March is a very busy month for us. We will be hosting the APS NSW quarterly gathering on Saturday 9th at Caley's Pavilion, Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden. Come along and listen to Heather Miles talk about garden design, buy some of our home-grown plants and the Lawlers' hand-made cards and join us all for afternoon tea.

We will also be selling our plants and cards at the Berowra Fauna Fair at the Berowra Community Centre, (The Gully Road, Berowra) on Sunday 17th. The Friends of Berowra Valley have a jam-packed day of speakers and wildlife demonstrations celebrating our marvellous wildlife. Please come and support us and the Friends at the fair.

Sue Bowen

What is an APS NSG Quarterly Gathering?

It is a gathering hosted by one of the district groups of APS NSW, held on one day, on 4 occasions each year.

Primarily it is an opportunity for members from different district groups to meet and greet, exchange knowledge and experience, see a different location and hear a speaker talk on a topic of interest.

How would such an event conclude? Like all good social events food is involved and in this case an afternoon tea. **As the host group APS NSG members are asked to supply this.** Tania Lamble would love to hear from you if you are able to assist with bought or home cooked food. Please contact Tania on 0415 043 671 or tanielamble@gmail.com if you are able to assist. The March APS NSG meeting is the night before and food could be dropped off then, if you are unable to attend on the Saturday.

If you are able to help with serving the afternoon tea, your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Again, please let Tania know of your availability.

Full details for gathering: *see page 2*

Doodia aspera,
Prickly Rasp Fern
Note the attractive new growth.
Quite a hardy plant that accepts some afternoon sun, and little water, in my place.
Jeff Howes



March Meeting Friday 8 March 2024

7.30 pm for 8pm

Beatrice Taylor Hall 25 Edgeworth David Ave, Hornsby NSW 2077

Speaker: Penny Hunstead

Topic: Bush Tucker

Background:

I am a professional horticulturist, still working, aged 80 ! I have been a member of APS Northern Beaches group for about 35 years.

Australian aboriginal bush tucker has been an interest of mine for many years. My presentation on this subject covers the history of the human use of indigenous plants, with photographic illustrations of species that can be grown in Sydney gardens. Specimens of a number of species will be on display, together with books on the topic.

Next meeting Friday 12 April 2024

Speaker: Tony Maxwell Topic: Cliff Beaglehole (1920 – 2002) – Botanical Collector Beyond Belief



APNSW Quarterly Gathering Cost: \$5

Program:

11am-12 noon - meet at Cayley's Pavilion Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden 420 Mona Vale Road, St Ives 2075

Choice of two walks:

- Spider and insect walk around the gardens with Helen Smith, or
- Walk around the garden to visit the threatened plant species in the garden.

Numbers on the insect and spider walk are limited to 25 places.

If you particularly want to join this activity you are advised to book a spot by emailing northshore@austplants.com.au.

12 noon -1 pm Lunch

Bring your own lunch and enjoy it with your friends and fellow native plant enthusiasts at Caley's Pavilion, where tea and coffee will be available.

A wonderful selection of native plants and beautiful handmade cards, by Jim and Pam Lawler featuring native plants, birds and animals, will be for sale at the Pavilion.

1pm -2.30 pm Presentation/ Workshop with Heather Miles

Native garden design workshop - design or trial and error?

If you are planning a new native garden, revamping an existing one or transitioning an exotic garden to natives, then this is the workshop for you. We will explore how to apply 'design' to each of these situations with examples and hands on practice. If you have a spot in your garden that you want to redesign, bring along a map of it and we will play with ideas. She will bring some other examples to give your imagination free rein!



Heather will also share with us how the Garden Design Study Group website on the ANPSA site is being updated to make the information more interesting and accessible.

Heather is an excellent speaker with a passion for Australian native plants and their use in garden design.

In addition, she is an excellent photographer and her photographs of plants and flowers will enhance her presentation.

Heather's talk will be followed by afternoon tea (provided by APS NSG members).



APS NSG President's report for 2023

2023 was another successful year for our group, largely due to the commitment and enthusiasm of our hard-working band of convenors and active volunteers. Without their assistance we would not be able to offer such a wide range of activities to our members and nor would we be able to provide visitors to the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden with a named, display of the plants currently in flower. My thanks to you all for your many years of service. I particularly thank our current and retiring committee members and convenors for their service.

This year we have made two purchases that will make our life easier. A new square terminal will ensure that we can take credit card sales at our plant sales events and a new label printer will mean that we no longer have to hand-write our plant labels.

Our plant sales at community events, (Berowra Fauna fair and Berowra Woodchop), meetings and via propagation were our main sources of income this year. This income was sufficient to pay for our Val Williams scholarship in Botany that was awarded to a Macquarie University Ph D student.

We welcome members who want to assist in the running of our activities and always enjoy seeing new members at our activities.

We continue to sell plants and provide growing advice to members at our Wednesday afternoon propagation sessions at the Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden.

New members: don't forget to pick up your two, free tubed plants at our meetings or propagation afternoons.

Sue Bowen

APSNSG Treasurer's Report for 2023

In 2023 the North Shore Group had income of \$7945 and expenditure of \$6272 resulting in a net gain of \$1673, an improvement on 2021 and 2022 which had small losses. The total value of our bank and investment accounts at the end of 2022 was \$90,765, an increase of 2%.

Again there was no Wildflower Festival but we had good sales at the Berowra Fauna Fair and particularly the Berowra Woodchop which took \$1152. Takings from plant sales at our monthly meetings have recovered after COVID to \$832.

Significant income included:

Community plant sales	\$2209
Propagation – plant sales from shadehouse	\$2027
Membership (net)	\$1250
Meetings – plant sales	\$832
Donations	\$532

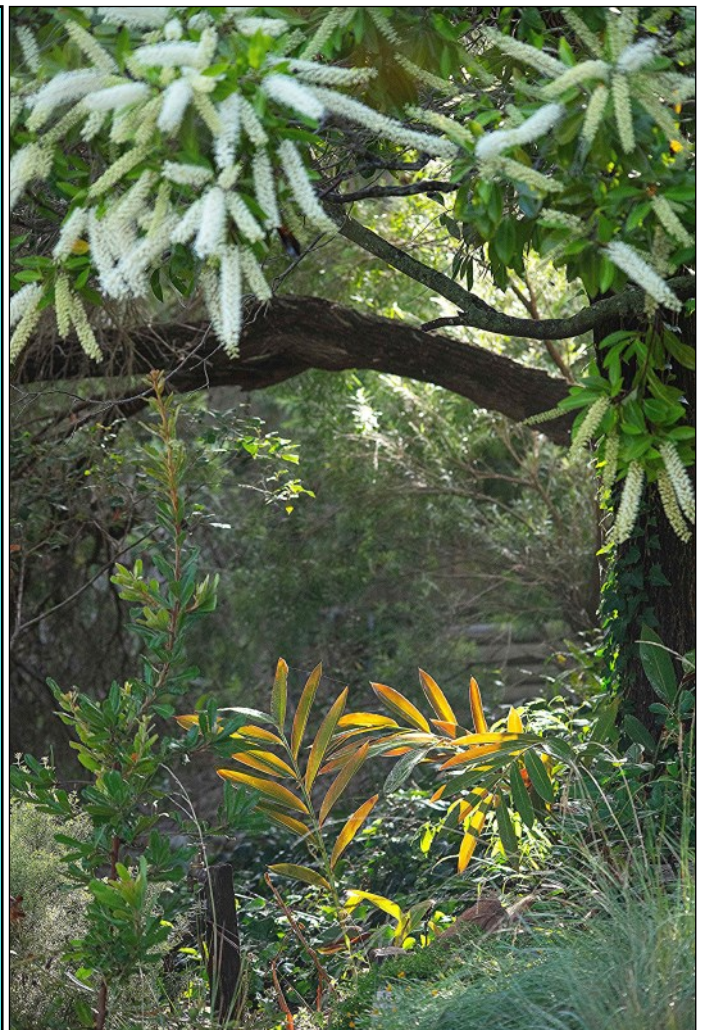
This year we awarded a scholarship of \$3257 for research into Australian native plants.

We spent \$738 on propagation materials. We bought a Square terminal, which has proven very useful for EFTPOS takings, and a label printer for our plants.

Significant expenditure included:

Val Williams Scholarship 2023	\$3257
Propagation materials	\$738
Label printer	\$665
Square terminal	\$329

Helen Ray



Tania Lamble sent in a recent shot of a section of their Palm Beach garden:

Buckinghamia celsissima (Ivory Curl tree) &
Alpinia caerulea 'Red Back' (native ginger hybrid)

Did anyone recognise the secret link between the photos in February 2024 *Blandfordia*?



Each image contained a Gum trees component! (sorry, but the editors got it wrong)

- The goanna was climbing the bark of a gum tree
- John will lead the Gum tree walk with Bob’s assistance
- The grasshoppers were on gum leaves
- The ants were in gum blossoms
- The wasp was on curled gum tree bark

Gum trees are a significant part of the plant life of the Solander Trail and provide habitat for much of the wildlife of KWG. John will demonstrate how looking at the form of a gum tree can be combined with bark characteristics, gum nut shape and number, leaf arrangement and venation and flower structure to aid in identification of gum trees along the Solander Trail, Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, 420 Mona Vale Rd, St Ives.

John will ‘nut out’ the species on this walk.

Meet at **9.45am** on **Monday 18th March** at Caley’s Patio in KWG for the guided walk in Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden, 420 Mona Vale Rd St Ives.



Information sheet provided. Sessions run to about 12 noon. These sessions are free. No prior knowledge is required. All welcome. No booking necessary. Please wear a hat, suitable footwear and clothes. Bring water/snack. Sunscreen and insect repellent as necessary. Walks are easy/medium.

Enquiries: Wendy 0419 323 035 or wendyagrimm@gmail.com

March 18	Monday	Gum trees along the Solander Trail	<i>Leader: John</i>
April 29	Monday	Bush foods & fibres	<i>Leader: Wendy</i>
May 13	Monday	Creative look at the bush	<i>Leader: Margo</i>

The Walks and Talks Programme Australian Plants Society North Shore Group

GROUP ACTIVITY MAY 2024

SUNDAY May 5 there will be a working bee at KWG at the shadehouse and shed behind the Visitor Information Centre. More information in April *Blandfordia* (There is no activity in April due to busy March and Easter & School holidays.)

Using fire in native gardens



David Roberts, one of our members, gave a most instructive talk on 9 February 2024. If you are wondering why the local hardware store has sold out of flame weeders, the answer lies in David's talk. It looks like a fun way to weed all the paved areas! David has been an active member of the Rural Fire Service for 20 years.

David is a professional bushcare manager, (also more fun), after switching from an office bound IT position several years ago. He manages 24 sites and the aim is to look long term - what can be achieved in 1 year, what can be achieved in 5 years or longer. Whenever bush regeneration is carried out both a follow up plan and implementation of the plan are required.

At different times Australia has moved relative to the equator and poles and it is currently moving north, making for drier conditions. Factor in anthropogenic climate change and flora (and fauna) will need to adapt successfully to survive.

David likes the simple analogy between natives and weeds as being like a seesaw with two children one at each end. The child elevated furthest from the ground is the natives and the child on, or nearer to, the ground being the weeds. One key principle is to only clear weeds as fast as native species can replace them.

Slashing, hand weeding and spraying all have the disadvantage that seed is not necessarily removed. Often the reverse happens, with seeds being spread and the soil disturbed so that the seed has an even better chance of germinating. The use of mulch to suppress regrowth should be considered. David is not keen on chemical weed control methods.

By contrast flame weeding destroys the plant and seed and does not disturb the soil. David showed images of an area treated with Trickle Burn- this is a low level burn, which is slower and burns at its own rate. There are always fire reduction/ extinguishing aids available. It is NOT a crown fire.

South side slopes are not subjected to any fire treatment as they are too wet and the flora there is not adapted for fire. African lovegrass (*Eragrostis curvula*) <https://weeds.dpi.nsw.gov.au/Weeds/Details/3> is one weed that is difficult to control with fire due to its clumping qualities and the fact that seed falls into the basal clump.

Remember to note, and follow, the conditions imposed by the usual fire season restrictions (1 October to 1 March in Sydney area) and any other restrictions which have been applied as warranted.

How to use fire/smoke/ ash in the garden?

David gave the following benefits of **flame weeding**:

- Most natives like fire. Fire encourages natives while discouraging weeds
- Adds nutrients to soil
- Kills seeds

Flame weeders cost \$50-\$350 (Gas bottle required)

David gave a brief demonstration outside after the meeting with his more powerful unit.

Ash can be spread in small amounts (1 shovel load per square metre) on garden beds and this will add potassium, calcium and magnesium. Note that wood ash is very alkaline.

Smoked water stimulates many native species. About 400 native species are known to either detect when fire has passed and/or require smoke residues for optional growth. Smoke treated vermiculite is also available.

Lloyd Hedges video *How to make smoked water* was referenced: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W1hW46hkrd4>

Direct fire on withering maiden hair ferns works a treat. Add some newspaper around the fern and light. Have a connected hose at the ready.

As part of the Q&A session it was noted that

- (i) home owners are responsible for the fuel load on their property. Please seek advice from the fire agencies and councils as to what this entails and how to minimise fire risks.
- (ii) For control of the fire process, fires are burnt downhill.
- (iii) David commented that the smoke from kikuyu is very bad for one's health.

In conclusion, there is a place for fire but proceed with caution and knowledge when using fire and follow recommendations for personal protective equipment.

Written by, and image by, Jan Williamson

Thanks to Bob Failes who gave a short presentation at the February meeting.

Plant names have gender

Bob gave a brief overview of how many plant names are gender specific.

Note the suffices

Examples: *Acacia myrtifolia* male -a
Ozothamnus diosmifolius female -us
Leptospermum squarrosum neutral -um
Other gender specific suffixes are -e female
-on male
-ma neutral

Genus (= Noun) Species (= Adjective)

Species name must be the same gender as the genus name

Of course, there are exceptions to all rules! Some species have an ending that is the same regardless of the genus e.g. - ex,-ens,-oides, -i

Species named after people usually end in -ii

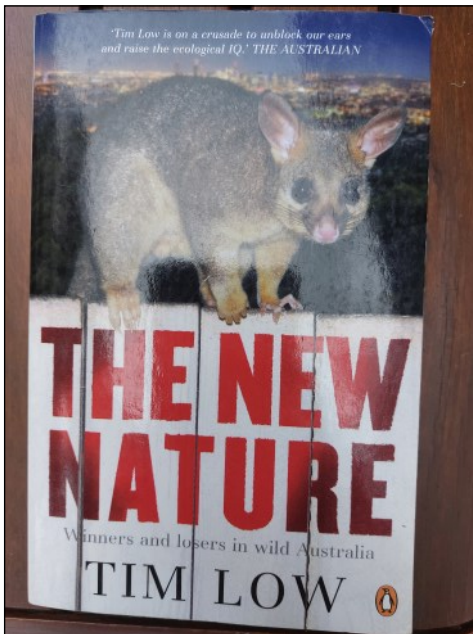
Another helpful site : <https://resources.austplants.com.au/stories/demystifying-native-plant-names-an-introduction/>

Cryptostylis erecta was spotted by Cate Webster in Berowra Valley National Park in early February .



Please remember that we welcome anyone who would like to give a such a presentation. It could be on your favourite plant, your recent travels and plants encountered, your biggest garden problem..... any topic that takes 5-10 minutes to present. Please let Sue Bowen or Jan Williamson know if you wish to contribute in this way.

Similarly, snippets or larger pieces of interest to members are always welcome for *Blandfordia*. Thanks to all who contribute, with a special thanks to Jeff Howes who continues to regularly give suggestions, photos and other articles.



Jeff Howes writes: I had a recent short holiday on Norfolk Island, which is about 1800Kms, northeast of Sydney and roughly in line with Brisbane. While there, I visited the Natural Park Information Centre and noticed the attached statement, titled "So what made it without People".

This correlated so well with Tim Low's excellent book *The New Nature*, in which he explains, so clearly how nature is adapting to all the changes humans have made and continue to make to our finite earth. There are winners and loser in this exercise as he clearly discusses.

In Chapter 10 'Foreign Exchange' he lists six species of Australian Birds that have gone to Norfolk and Lord Howe Islands both to Australia's east (silvereys, swallows, white-faced herons, swamphens, kestrels and black ducks) and two birds from Australia's west (white-faced herons and nankeen kestrels) have reached Christmas Island. As well, many butterflies and other insects have also made that journey. How did

they survive that distance?

His book is worth reading and will, I am sure change your view of nature, it did mine. It may also make you rethink the role of weeds in helping the survival of our wildlife and help you understand why, many threatened and endangered species have made our cities and industrial sites home and are thriving.

The New Nature. Tim Low Penguin Books pub 2017





For full details see: <https://www.anpsa2024conference.com/>

2024 Activities: SEE <https://austplants.com.au/North-Shore>

MONTHLY **GENERAL MEETING** with guest speaker

WALKS & TALKS 2024 is held at Ku-ring-gai Wildflower Garden (KWG) 420 Mona Vale Rd, St. Ives
Resuming with walk only on Monday 18th March see page 4 *Enquiries* Please contact Wendy Grimm 0419 323 035

MONTHLY GROUP ACTIVITY 9 March 2024 hosting Quarterly APS NSW Gathering at KWG see page 3
5 May 2024 Working bee at shed and shadehouse KWG

PROPAGATION is held at KWG on alternate Wednesdays from 1-4pm **6 & 20 March 3 & 17 April**

BUSHCARE KWG 13 & 27 March 10 & 24 April 9am –12pm

THE KNOLL APS NSG Native Plant Community Garden at KWG Please contact Wendy Grimm 0419 323 035

PLANT SALES and growing advice at our shadehouse (with white roof) at KWG (behind Visitors' Centre & KWG Nursery) on propagation afternoons every 2nd Wednesday (weather permitting) 1-4pm

FLOWER DISPLAY at KWG Visitor Centre

Committee Contacts

northshore@austplants.com.au

President:
Sue Bowen 0478 957 951

Website: <https://austplants.com.au/North-Shore>

Newsletter Editor: Jan Williamson
9875 2262 janw7531@gmail.com

The preferred method for Membership Applications & Renewals is to go to the APS NSW website and follow the instructions at <https://austplants.com.au/about-membership>

If joining or renewing online presents any problems assistance can be given by emailing your query to northshore@austplants.com.au

Are you in a joint membership of APS NSW?
Would you prefer to use separate email addresses and/or contact numbers? This arrangement would mean that you each receive electronic communications, e.g. *Blandfordia*. This can be arranged by contacting Merle Thompson apsnswmembership@gmail.com

2024 Activities CONTACTS

Walks and Talks at KWG	Wendy Grimm	0419 323 035
Propagation at KWG	Tania Lamble	0415 043 671
Bushcare at KWG	Sue Bowen	0478 957 951
The Knoll	Wendy Grimm	0419 323 035
Flower Display at KWG	Gillian Gutridge	0421 061 345

February 2024 Committee Meeting Notes

- APS NSW Quarterly Gathering hosted by APS NSG 9 March 2024
- Berowra Fauna Fair 17 March
- Scanned APS NSG newsletters and Mitchell Library
- Working bee at KWG shadehouse
- Speakers Programme
- W&T
- Working bee at KWG: shed & shadehouse

More plants for sale

Brian Roach (APS NSG member) at Westleigh Native Plants
Contact westleighnativeplants@gmail.com

Newsletter submissions:

Deadline for submissions is the third Friday of the month.
For the April 2024 edition is 15 March 2024
Editor: janw7531@gmail.com

Do you want to know more about native plants?

Have you tried <https://austplants.com.au/> and within that site <https://resources.austplants.com.au/plant-database/> ?

Blandfordia The Newsletter of the Australian Plants Society North Shore Group